

# BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY PROVO, UTAH



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## THE DWARF'S SPECTACLES

OTHER FAIRY TALES

·The XXX Co.





"Don't be afraid, I will do you no harm."

## THE DWARF'S SPECTACLES

AND

#### OTHER FAIRY TALES

TOLD BY

#### MAX NORDAU

TO HIS MAXA FROM HER FOURTH TO HER SEVENTH BIRTHDAY

TRANSLATED BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY
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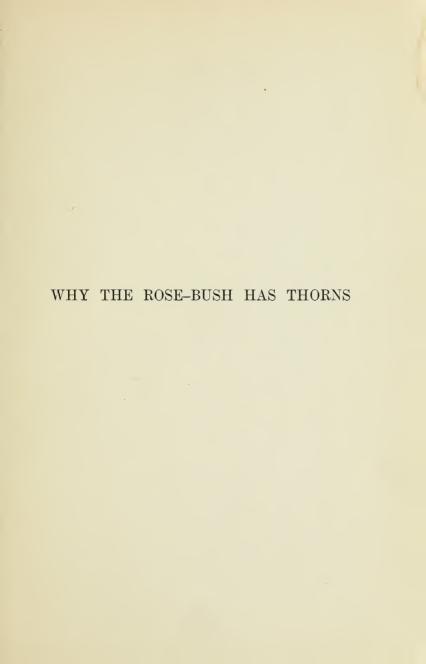
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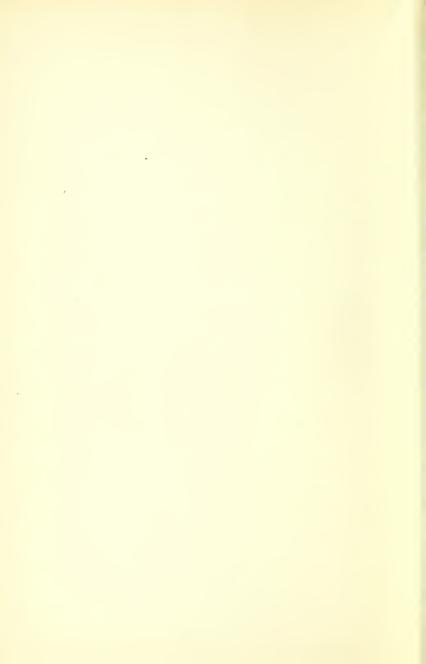
MIGHAM YOUR STREET,

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## WHY THE ROSE-BUSH HAS THORNS

The rose-bush in the garden is beautiful. But the naughty thorns which often pricked your fingers till they bled, when you wanted to pick a bud! "The horrid rose-bush!" I suppose you said, and perhaps even struck at it with a stick. Don't say that, little girl. When you know why the rose-bush is covered with thorns from top to bottom, you will see that it is not horrid, but very good.

Do you remember how the nightingale sung during the May nights, when the moon was shining brightly, and the roses were so sweet, and the little glow-worms glittered in the grass? It sounded like a loud wail, often almost like sobbing, so that you felt very sorrowful, and asked us, "What is the matter with the little nightingale, that she sings so mournfully?"

Now I will tell you, as the evening will be long and we have plenty of time.

There was once a nightingale, the grandmamma of all the nightingales in the country. She came from a hot province in Africa, because it was too warm for her there, and she wanted to live here, where it is cool and shady. She looked about in the woods and meadows, and in the great gardens behind the houses, to find

a tree or bush where she could build her nest. All the trees were very kind, offered her a branch or a twig, and promised that she should be well taken care of with them. Every one would have been glad to have her for a guest, for she had sung merrily as she flew around, so that they all admired her beautiful voice and never wearied of listening to it.

The nightingale searched long and carefully, perched sometimes on one tree, sometimes on another, found one thing here, and something else there, which did not exactly suit her, and finally decided upon the rosebush. It was not too high and it was not too low, its foliage was neither too thick nor too thin, no one lived there except a few neat and quiet golden beetles, and, above all, it was wonderfully adorned with its roses and completely surrounded by the most delicious fragrance. At that time it had no thorns. Its stem was perfectly smooth, so that you could have passed your hand up and down over it without scratching yourself in the least.

The nightingale was very much pleased with her choice, and, in her joy at having found such a beautiful, suitable dwelling, sang and trilled so clearly that all the buds on the rose-bush opened from delight, and it was covered in a single night with magnificent full-blown roses.

The nightingale at once began to build her nest, a beautiful little, round nest, under a shady roof of light-

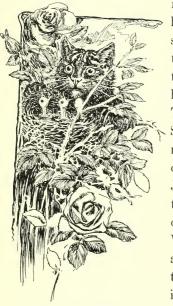
green leaves, with big, pale pink roses in front of the little windows, and, after it was well lined with grass and soft down, she laid several tiny eggs, and brooded over them until the nightingale children were hatched out, — dear little soft things, with black eyes and yellow-gray rough little heads, and yellow beaks, which were always open and always wanted to eat.

Mamma Nightingale was so happy that she hardly knew what to do with herself, and nursed and fed her little ones — there were three of them — and sang the sweetest lullabies. The neighbor birds came flying from far and near, perched on the branches of the trees, listened to the young mother's singing, and flapped their wings, — that's the way the birds clap applause, because they haven't any hands.

But the rose-bush stood near a house where a gray cat lived, — an ugly creature with green eyes, a long, bristling mustache, and big sharp claws. This cat was on bad terms with everybody on account of her stealing and evil tricks. She dared not be seen in the day, because the dogs would have chased her, and the washerwomen would have thrown hot water on her. She always stayed in a dark cellar, and came out only at night to do all sorts of mischief.

The wicked cat heard the nightingale singing and was angry, as wicked people always are when they hear or see anything beautiful. The squealing of the mice, before whose holes she watched for hours, seemed

to her much more musical than the joyous trilling and sweet lullabies of the bird-mother. Stealing out of her dark cellar, she crept through the grass and under the bushes to a place from which she could see the



rose-bush, looked up with her green eyes, and when she discovered the nest and the three little birds with their busy mother, she said to herself: "Oh! that rabble! Those miserable vagabonds! Screaming and making a racket as if they were the only people in the world. Just wait; I'll teach you to wake respectable folks out of their afternoon nap." Waving the end of her tail to and fro, she crept back again to her cellar and waited until it grew dark. Then she came

out, walked slowly and noiselessly to the rose-bush, and peered up at it.

The nightingale had just flown away for a short time, as was her custom, to bring her little ones their supper, that is, a few soft caterpillars, and little moths which only fly about after sunset. Meanwhile the nightingale children were left alone, twittering happily to one another, and rejoicing that mamma would soon come back with something good to eat.

Suddenly over the edge of the nest appeared a terrible head, with fierce green eyes and a frightful mustache. It was the wicked cat, which, like a true thief, had climbed up the smooth stem of the rose-bush, and now fell upon the poor defenceless brood. The little downy birds were so frightened that they did not even find strength to utter a feeble cry for help. At least their mortal terror did not last long. Before one could count three, the wicked cat had seized the three sisters by the neck, one after another, and killed them with a single bite. She threw their little warm bodies out of the nest with her paws, and then leaped after them, to eat them at the foot of the rose-bush.

Only a few crows in a neighboring linden tree had witnessed the murder. It had been done so quickly that they could not prevent it. But now they rushed with loud cries upon the murderess, and pecked her so furiously with their beaks, that she left the little dead nightingales lying on the ground and ran back to her cellar, where the crows could not follow her.

Meantime the nightingale came back with her beak full, and put her head through the roof of rose-leaves above her nest. She saw with terror that it was empty. Dropping the worms and moths, she called so that her voice echoed a long distance through the evening air: "My children! Where are you? My children!"

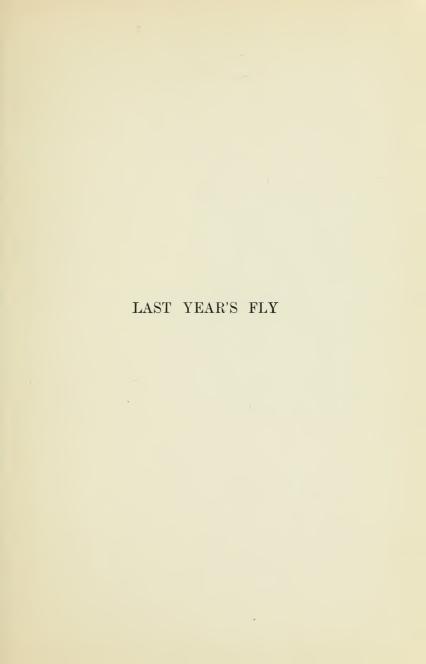
The crows flew up sorrowfully, surrounded her, and told her as gently as they could what a misfortune had befallen her. Her little heart almost broke with despair. She let the crows take her to her children, and covering them with her wings, mourned over them, and would not leave them, until the beetles which are called grave-diggers carried them to the grave. It was a beautiful funeral procession; all the ants, many beetles, and most of the birds in the neighborhood followed in the train, all mourning and lamenting. But this did not console the poor mother, and when, after the burial, she sat alone in her deserted nest, she sobbed aloud and asked the rose-bush in a half-stifled voice, "Rose-bush, O Rose-bush, why did you allow it, why did you not guard my little ones better?"

The rose-bush said nothing, but it was so troubled that all the petals fell from its blossoms, and it thought and planned how in the future it could better protect the beloved guest and her family. And then it had a bright idea. All night long it worked softly, but busily, and when day came, it was set from top to bottom with thorns, as sharp and pointed and crooked as the claws of the wicked cat, and it said in a soothing voice to the grieving nightingale: "Cheer up, dear, lovely nightingale, lay more eggs, brood over them again, no harm will befall them: you see, no wicked cat can attack your little ones. My thorns will protect them and you." The nightingale could not bear her solitude. She laid

more eggs, brooded over them, and when again several sweet little round creatures in gray down filled her nest, she began to sing once more, but the song was a different one. No joyous trilling, no gay melodies, but the mournful, sobbing tones, which almost always move you to tears. She cannot forget her first little ones, and she still remembers them with sweet sadness, though she is very happy with her new darlings.

Since that time the rose-bush has had thorns, and the nightingale sings her mournful lament, but at least the cats cannot attack her nest when she flies away for a little while, to get caterpillars and night-moths for her babies.







#### LAST YEAR'S FLY

You know what becomes of the flies in autumn. As soon as it begins to grow cold, they are weak, stay

on the window-panes, don't fly off even when you touch them with your finger, and some morning they stick motionless and are dead.

Now once upon a time there was a big brown fly, whose name was Buzz-Buzz. One warm summer day, when the window stood open, she had flown into the kitchen and did not leave it again; for it



was a comfortable place, and suited her very well. There were always grains of sugar in the cupboard, and milk and dregs of coffee on the table, so that she had plenty to eat and drink. When she was not licking and nibbling, she was cleaning her wings and back with her fore-legs; and when she was not making herself beautiful, she was watching, curious to see what Marie was doing at the hearth, how she lighted the fire, put on the

pots, salted and spiced, stirred and beat, and tried to guess what nice things there would be to taste that day.

When Marie was not in the kitchen, she chatted with the cricket that lived in a crack of the chimney, with whom she had quickly made friends. The cricket was a very lively creature, and never grew tired of talking and gossiping, asking questions, and telling stories. There were plenty of visitors, too. As soon as Marie opened the window in the morning, whole swarms of flies flew in,—sisters, cousins, and neighbors,—who told Buzz-Buzz all the news, while she politely offered them coffee and cakes. She had them, and could easily do it. It was a perpetual feast, and, before she knew it, summer had passed and autumn came.

At first Buzz-Buzz did not notice it. She was too comfortable. Why should she care, if the frost fell night after night outside? It was pleasant in her warm kitchen. But she gradually found that some change had taken place in the world. Marie opened the window more and more seldom, and the relatives and acquaintances no longer came to call. If a friend flew in now and then, she seemed strangely dull, scarcely touched the dainties Buzz-Buzz offered, answered questions indifferently, and sometimes, to the horror of Buzz-Buzz, suddenly dropped down in the middle of a word and did not stir again.

Buzz-Buzz asked the cricket what this meant, but





"She had barely enough strength left to light on Marie's cap, and let her carry her home."

the cricket made no answer. When Buzz-Buzz crawled to the crack and peeped in, she saw the cricket lying stretched out, asleep. It slept all the time now, from morning till night, and from night till morning. Buzz-Buzz could not understand it and began to feel very uneasy. She waited till Marie went out, and flew out with her, to look about a little and perhaps discover why no more visitors came, and why the few who did were so dull and feeble, why they so often grew sick and died while they were sitting in the kitchen with her, drinking coffee.

Out of doors Buzz-Buzz came near faring very badly. She had scarcely had time to notice how different everything looked from usual, when the cold chilled every limb, her wings grew heavy, her legs became stiff, darkness surrounded her, and she had barely enough strength left to light on Marie's cap, and let her carry her home. If Marie had not been there, Buzz-Buzz would never have reached her kitchen alive.

It was some time before Buzz-Buzz recovered entirely. By degrees the recollection of what she had and had not seen, during her brief flight, came back to her. Why did it look so dreary out of doors? True, there were no terrible swallows, always trying to kill the poor flies, but there were no flies, no gnats, no butterflies, no sign of the usual gay life of noonday. There was not even a patch of blue sky, not a sunbeam, not

a single green leaf. Bare trees, gray clouds, and an icy air, which pierced through the unprotected body like a knife. How fortunate that she had the warm kitchen! There the closed windows did not let the cold enter, and it was as comfortable by the hearth as on the most beautiful summer day, only one mustn't go too near the fire. Buzz-Buzz took care not to do that.

She had escaped a great danger. This Buzz-Buzz knew very well. She rejoiced over it, and rubbed her fore-legs together with much satisfaction. But she did not think only of herself. She remembered the others, — the sisters, cousins, aunts, neighbors, friends, and acquaintances with whom, in fair weather, she had spent so many pleasant hours. They must all be dead. Otherwise, one or another would surely come to visit her. But no one called. This made Buzz-Buzz very sad, and though she herself was comfortable, she often sat still in a corner, sighing and grieving for the dead. Perhaps she often wept, too; but I can't say so positively, because a fly's tears are so small that we cannot see them unless we watch very carefully.

Buzz-Buzz ate and drank well, and she slept well, too, only a little too much, so that she grew fat and lazy, and would rather sit quiet or crawl a little on the wall or ceiling than to fly. Flying was growing too hard for her. She wondered why, after being so nimble, she was now such a clumsy person, but gradually be-

came used to it. People get used to everything — even to loneliness. True, that is the hardest of all. The winter was long and, though the days were short, Buzz-Buzz had more than time enough to think over everything. Especially whether there would ever again be flies in the world. To live all alone in the wide world is surely worse than death. It would be altogether too terrible, if she were always to be the only fly. True, she still had one dear friend, the cricket. But the cricket just slept and slept, and she could make nothing of it. Would the lively little creature ever wake up again? Even if it did, though a beloved friend, the cricket was no relation, and could not take the place of one's own flesh and blood. When she pondered over these sad thoughts, her heart grew heavy, and even sugar cakes and coffee did not taste right. What is the use of wealth, if we can share it with no one?

At last the winter was over, spring came, the sun again shone brilliantly, and there was a shade of green on the dry branches of the two trees in the garden.

Then one morning a strange thing happened. Marie threw the kitchen window wide open, a cool, fragrant breeze blew in, which at first made Buzz-Buzz shiver, but soon gave her new strength and vigor. After some hesitation, she ventured to leave her corner between the wall and the ceiling and fly to the open window—and lo! almost before she reached it, she heard around her the beloved buzzing of her relatives, which she had

missed so long. A whole swarm of beautiful, glittering young flies were whirling, dancing, and playing in the sunshine, and Buzz-Buzz, wild with joy, rushed into the circle and, with outspread wings, darted from one to another that were nearest, trying to clasp and kiss them, exclaiming in a half-stifled voice: "Sisters, dear sisters! Oh, how glad I am that I have lived to see you again!"

But the flies scattered, circling around at a distance, and staring at her. Then one cried out, "Who is this scarecrow?" And another giggled, "Look at the fat pigeon," while a third called, "Madam, your wings haven't been brushed to-day." Then they all laughed.

Buzz-Buzz was puzzled and offended. It was hard for her to stay in the air so long, and she rested on the window-sill, saying mournfully: "Do none of you know me? I am Buzz-Buzz." And she named many sisters, cousins, and friends who had been young and enjoyed life with her the year before.

But the new generation of flies had no knowledge of these names, and the more poor Buzz-Buzz mentioned, the more suspicious and unfriendly the young flies became. They buzzed together, "Let us take care, she is a swindler."

"Oh, come! Do believe me!" Buzz-Buzz coaxed anxiously. "I had so many sisters and friends last year. Then we were a great swarm, as you are now. And I was the gayest one of all. But the autumn came

and they all died, and then the winter followed and I was left all alone, and believed the world had gone to ruin. But now spring has returned and I see my relatives again, and they are just as merry as ever. I am so glad to see you, why are you so unkind, and keep away, and do not want to own me for your sister?"

The young flies had come nearer, and listened with greater and greater astonishment. They let her go on until her breath failed and she began to cough. Then one fly, with gold and ruby eyes, that seemed to be the sauciest of them all, answered: "Madam, you're talking nonsense. You think us more stupid than we are. We are not to be fooled. What do you mean by last year? Every fly knows that the world began with us. There was nothing before us. And no one ever saw a fly die, unless a swallow or a sparrow ate it. Autumn and winter? Nobody ever heard of such things. As far as flies can remember, everything has always been just as it is now. You ought to be ashamed of yourself for trying to impose upon us."

The others buzzed approvingly, and one called loudly: "Don't you see that she is crazy? Let the silly chatter-box alone, and come back to our dance." They all waved their gleaming mother-of-pearl wings, and buzzed away.

"Sisters! Dear sisters!" pleaded Buzz-Buzz, panting for breath, but not a fly listened and, in an instant, she was alone on the window-sill, and the others were

far away whirling about in the golden sunshine. Buzz-Buzz sat still a short time, as if she was dazed. She could not understand why her young sisters were so unkind to her, when she had been longing for them all winter. At last she determined to go back to her kitchen and see whether the cricket was awake, so that she could tell her adventures and bewail her troubles.

The cricket really was awake, but another cricket had called, and the two were chirping busily to each other, so, when Buzz-Buzz came to the chimney and put in her head, her friend called somewhat roughly: "What do you want here? Don't you see I have a visitor? I've no time for you now!"

Buzz-Buzz, without saying a word, went back to her old corner between the wall and the ceiling, and sat there quietly with drooping wings.

Something had again changed in the world, and it was full of new life. But what did it avail poor Buzz-Buzz?

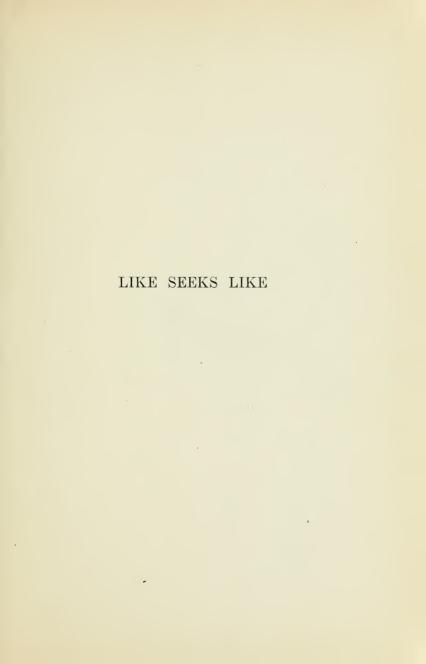
She had grown old and did not suit this new world. I ought to have died in the autumn, like all my sisters, she thought sorrowfully, staring at the thin column of smoke which rose from the fire, whirling upward through the chimney out above the roof, above the house, into the sunny air, to the blue sky. She gazed at the floating bluish pillar, and a great longing seized her to mount upward with the smoke, and be borne by its soft, warm breath out into the sunny air, to the

blue sky. She crept nearer and nearer. Suddenly she could resist no longer and, with one bound, leaped into the midst of the pillar of smoke and disappeared.

She did not know what had happened, she grew dazed, her senses failed, she sank down, and the next moment was a little heap of ashes on the burning coals. She had felt no pain, for she was senseless when she fell into the fire.

The cricket in the chimney chirped secrets to the visitor, and outside the open window danced the flies, sure that they would live forever, unless a swallow ate them.







## LIKE SEEKS LIKE

One birthday, a little girl, besides many other beautiful presents, received from an uncle who always had queer ideas, the gift of a white mouse. It was a dear little thing, with soft fur which shone like silver, eyes like rubies, and a fine stiff mustache. It lived in a pretty, roomy cage, where it had a soft, white cottonwool bed, the very best food, — that is, large grains of wheat and peeled hazel nuts in two glass dishes, — and a wheel which could be turned from the inside or outside, and on whose spokes it could ride.

The little girl was very much pleased with the white mouse, for she loved all harmless animals. She was not even afraid of it, like other children, who scream when they see a poor little mouse run across the floor, but took it bravely in her hand and stroked it. The mouse was forced to permit this, but seemed to find no pleasure in it, for the little creature trembled in every limb, and its heart beat so quickly with fright that one could not count the throbs.

"Come, don't be afraid," said the little girl. "I'm not a cat, and I won't eat you." She put it back into the cage. "You are still shy, but you'll get used to

me. I'll love you dearly and treat you well; then you will love me, too, and be my grateful little friend."

She insisted upon taking care of her little mouse herself. Every day she cleaned its cage, changed the cottonwool, filled the glass dishes, and, during the warm hours of the day, placed the cage on the window-sill, covering the outside with a piece of green cloth so that the sun-



shine should not make the mouse's red eyes ache. While doing this, she said all sorts of soothing words to it in a sweet, coaxing voice. "You are well off, my little mouse," she told it. "You need not creep into small, dark holes, where it

must be dirty and cold, and where bugs and roaches live. Brrr!" She shivered with fear at the bare thought. "You have a beautiful house; you are kept as warm and clean as a princess; I give you dainties which you could not have unless you stole them at the risk of your life—sweet grapes, raisins, nuts, milkbread, and bits of bacon. No cat can harm you. You need not be afraid of any trap. You are a real favorite of fortune among the mice."

But the mouse did not think so. It remained sulky, and showed no gratitude for its mistress's care and affection. When it thought no one was looking, it played happily enough with the wheel or the cottonwool in its nest, or combed and brushed itself with its handlike fore paws as carefully as a soldier before parade. But as soon as the little girl went to its cage, it suddenly stopped its cleaning or its play, and crept under the cotton-wool. When its mistress put her hand in the cage to take it out and pet it, the mouse darted into every corner of its house to escape the searching hand, and when it was caught, uttered a terrified squeaking, and struggled as violently as its feeble strength would permit.

"Foolish thing," said the little girl, but she did not lose patience. "You will see in time how kindly I mean by you."

Whether the mouse really did see this, is hard to say. Perhaps it only found out that it was of no use to resist. It struggled less when its mistress touched it, and therefore seemed tamer. But it did not answer to the name of Snow-White which the little girl had given it, obeyed no call, and pressed close against the back of the cage if any one looked through the grating of its house. In time it even lost its appetite, so that it grew thin and miserable. At last it also gave up turning in its wheel, crouched sadly in one corner, and became so weak that it could scarcely drag itself about.

This grieved the little girl to the heart. She ran to her mother, saying: "Oh, mamma, come and see what is the matter with Snow-White. It doesn't eat, it doesn't play, and it is always cross. I can't cheer it up at all."

Her mother smiled. "What do you do to cheer it up?"

"I stroke it, I talk to it, I even sing my prettiest songs, for which you all kiss me. But Snow-White doesn't take any notice of them at all. The little thing is certainly ill. We must give it something."

"That would do no good," her mother answered. "I think your little mouse is tired because it is always alone."

"But it has me," cried the little girl.

"You are not enough, apparently. It wants another mouse for company."

- The eccentric uncle was told how matters stood, and he immediately brought a second mouse, which was put into little Snow-White's house.

Snow-White received the newcomer in the most generous way. It made a broad, comfortable place for the stranger in the very middle of the cotton-wool nest, where it was softest and warmest, while mousie itself was content with the narrowest edge; brought out the most delicious dainties; and after the guest was rested and refreshed, went through the house, showing everything, even the wheel, on which it performed its tricks outside and inside; then, sitting down

by the visitor, nosed and licked it, as dogs nurse their puppies. Snow-White seemed completely changed, no longer dull, but excited, moving about as swiftly and busily as a housekeeper who suddenly receives a welcome guest.

The little girl watched the pair happily, and, after a while, wanted to join the two mice. As usual, she put her hand into the cage to catch them. But the newcomer leaped out of the nest with one bound and sought shelter in the wheel, and Snow-White was extremely angry, squeaked furiously, and snapped at the hand. If the little girl had not drawn it back quickly, the mouse would certainly have bitten her. At first the child wanted to punish Snow-White. She had already seized her penholder to beat the little creature's white fur with it, but she controlled her temper, let the animal run, and put down the stick which she had already lifted for the first blow.

"Go, I'll do you no harm," she said. "You know no better. You are a naughty, ungrateful thing, but that is probably only your stupidity, so I'll forgive you."

She had scarcely uttered these words in a very low tone, when she suddenly saw a wonderfully beautiful woman with fair hair and blue eyes, in a light blue dress, on which glittered a great number of silver stars. She had no time to wonder how the lovely lady could have come in unseen, for she said to her in a voice like sweet music: "That was right, dear child. We must

always be kind and indulgent to the weak. As a reward, you shall understand the language of the white mice."

"I suppose you are a fairy?" asked the little girl, timidly.

"Perhaps so," replied the lovely lady, smiling. Then, bending down, she kissed the child gently on the fore-head, and suddenly disappeared, though the little girl did not see her pass through the door. The child thought she had been dreaming, but a delicious fragrance of roses, which remained in the room, proved that she was awake, and really had talked with the fairy.

She turned quickly to the cage to find out whether she actually did understand the language of the mice. At first she heard nothing except a very low humming, like the distant buzzing of flies, in which she could catch no words. But when she listened longer and more intently, her ears became accustomed to the faint noise, and, yes — after a few minutes she heard more and more distinctly two little voices talking to each other.

"My poor, poor friend!" said one voice.

"You are right to pity me," replied the other. "I have had a hard time, I can tell you; I've led a life here which I would not wish my worst enemy."

"Yet the food and lodging seem to be very good," answered the first voice.

"There is no reason to complain of them," remarked the second, "if one could only enjoy one's life. But how is that possible, when one is constantly tormented, and frightened, and abused?" The little girl listened intently. Who could have tortured and frightened and abused Snow-White?

The delicate little voice went on: "There is a frightful monster here, even more terrible than a cat. Whenever this horrible creature comes near my house, I think that my last hour has come. It is as big as a mountain. You can't even imagine it. It has paws in which we two, and three or four sisters and cousins, would have plenty of room. Each toe is as long as I am from my nose to my tail. The claws are as wide and thick as the doors of a house. The monster grasps me with these huge toes, so that I grow faint, and cannot help screaming with pain and terror. But what is the use of my moaning? The monster has no heart. It enjoys my suffering. It passes its huge paw down my back, and then I feel as if a heavy wagon were rolling over me. I don't understand how a single bone in my body remains whole under this cruel torture. The monster raises me to its head, which is misshapen, round, and perfectly flat in front, without a sign of a muzzle. It has no mustache, either, only on the upper part of the skull a forest of thick yellow hair. Its eyes are as big as my head. I really don't exaggerate. And when it has me close to these fierce, pitiless eyes, it opens a huge mouth, and utters such a terrible roar that I feel as if the world were going to ruin. After this torture, the monster puts me back in my house again, but then I am more dead than alive, as you may

suppose, and it is a long time before I can recover. In a little while, the bone-breaking, the thundering roar, and the terrible staring with the enormous eyes begin once more, and I spend my life, with aching limbs, remembering the last attack, and trembling at the thought of the next one."

"But what does this monster want of you?" asked the first voice. "Does it want to eat you?"

"I don't think so," answered the other, "or it would have done it before now. It only wants to play with me. It takes a cruel pleasure in tormenting me, in killing me by slow torture."

"Oh, sister, how you frighten me!" said the first voice. "Must this be my fate, too?"

"I don't know," replied the other; "but, at any rate, I now have you, and you have me, and we can bear our misery more easily together."

The little girl wanted to hear no more. Deeply grieved, she ran to her mother, told her everything, complained of Snow-White's ingratitude, and exclaimed, "If I am a monster, if my fingers are like posts, and my voice is a roar, I won't trouble myself about her any longer."

"That will be the best way," said her mother. "Content yourself with feeding the little creature. A mouse, even if it is a white one, cares nothing for your society and your love. A mouse is always a mouse, and people can be happy only with their equals."

THE PROUD DOLL



## THE PROUD DOLL

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl named Aennchen. She was very pretty and good-natured, but a little spoiled, and therefore capricious and quick-tempered; for she was the only child of wealthy people, and her parents gave her her own way in everything. From the time Aennchen was a year old, she had been loaded with presents of all kinds at every opportunity. First there were india-rubber animals, then little houses and gardens with green trees, then small pails, sieves, cake shapes, and shovels to work in the sand, then rocking-horses and big donkeys on wheels, and finally dolls, small and large, fair and dark, unbreakable wooden ones and very fragile china ones, simply and richly dressed. But the one which was given to her by her aunt, on her fifth birthday, was more beautiful than any she had ever had before.

This was a very aristocratic lady, almost as large as Aennchen herself, and dressed like a princess. She had a satin cloak, a silk gown with several flounces, gold buckles at her little waist, white leather shoes, embroidered underclothes, and a magnificent velvet and lace hat, with an ostrich plume. A mother-of-pearl fan hung from her belt, and she carried in her

hand a dainty sunshade. She wore bracelets, a necklace, and earrings, the only things which Aennchen did not like; for her mother had told her that only savages



bore holes in the ears, nose, and lips to hang jewels in them. The doll had long, silky light hair, which was waved, braided, and artistically arranged with hairpins and little tortoise-shell combs. When she was laid down, she instantly shut her big blue eyes, and fell asleep.

When she was lifted up, she opened her eyes and was awake again at once. She could say Papa, Mamma, and many other things distinctly, but usually maintained a well-bred silence, and spoke only when she was invited to do so by a pressure on her body. She did not come to Aennchen like a person who has nothing except what she carries on her back, but brought with her a magnificent outfit, a chest of clothes, a bureau full of under linen, a sideboard supplied with china, glass, and metal dishes, and table damask. At first Aennchen felt really embarrassed when her new playmate was introduced to her. She could not take her in her arms and carry her about, she was too large and too heavy. She was told that she must not undress and dress her, lest she should spoil her beautiful clothes, and undressing and dressing her doll is the greatest pleasure a little girl takes in it. Aennchen admired her, but she did not really love her, and did not grow intimate enough with her to speak to her familiarly. When she first became better acquainted with her, she discovered a very serious fault — the new doll was extremely proud.

Aennchen had wanted to call her Minna. This was the name of her nurse, whom her parents had kept in the house after the child outgrew milk, and to whom Aennchen was deeply attached. But the doll would not have the name. She did not hear it. She did not turn her head, when Aennchen called her by it, but remained sitting as stiffly as if she was made of wood. And yet she had been manufactured of the finest, most pliable kid and china, and her limbs moved at every joint. This obstinacy provoked Aennchen so much that she struck the doll. Then the latter said dryly: "Pardon me. People do not strike me."

"If you don't want to be struck," replied Aennchen, angrily, "answer when you are called by name."

"Minna is no name for me," replied the doll, coldly. "What do you want to be called, then?" asked Aennchen, bewildered.

"At least Kunigunde," answered the haughty doll.

At first Aennchen was greatly inclined to box her ears, and say: "A name that is good enough for my dear nurse is far too good for a stupid, puffed-up thing like you," but the doll's cool audacity awed her. She yielded, and the doll received the name of Kunigunde.

Aennchen had trouble with Kunigunde in another way. She had three favorite dolls. They were small and easily handled, simply dressed, and very dear to the little girl, because she had had them a long time, and because she was allowed to dress and undress them as much as she wished. Their clothes were no longer perfectly fresh, and showed here and there a ripped seam, a loose button, or even a rent, and their faces and hands could not be considered exactly models of cleanliness, though Aennchen, who was very fond of splashing in the water, often scrubbed them with soap, sponge, and brushes.

She wanted to make Kunigunde acquainted with these three older dolls, and invited her to a coffee party. She put Kunigunde's handsomest table-cloth on the table, set out her beautiful dishes, and brought out the three dolls. When Kunigunde saw the little shabby figures, she sat up as straight as a dart, and stared into vacancy with her big blue eyes, taking no more notice of the three dolls than if they had been empty air. Aennchen put her three friends into little chairs, and was going to do the same for Kunigunde. But the latter refused to take the place. "I am not used to sitting at the same table with common people," she said.

"May I at least have the honor of drinking coffee in your lofty society?" asked Aennchen, scornfully.

"Yes," replied Kunigunde, condescendingly, pretending not to notice the jeer.

This was too much for Aennchen. Seizing Kunigunde violently, she was going to press her by force into the chair. The conceited doll made herself perfectly rigid, and said in a defiant, rattling voice, "You can break me, if you are strong enough, but you cannot compel me to sit at the same table with these people."

"We will not force our company upon the lady," said the three modest dolls, rising at the same moment.

"Oh, nonsense," cried Aennchen, "stay quietly here, children, we won't trouble ourselves any further about this puffed-up creature." Grasping Kunigunde by the

arm, she threw her into the corner so hard that she bounced.

"I thank you for your courteous treatment," Kunigunde's voice was heard saying, after she had recovered a little from the fall. "I beg you not to feel under the slightest restraint, but to use my coffee set just as if it belonged to you."

This was strong, so strong that it almost took away the three modest dolls' breath. No doll had ever before ventured to speak to her mistress in such a way. Aennchen could not allow such lack of respect. She hastened to Kunigunde, screaming: "Now my patience is gone. Your coffee set belongs to me, and you belong to me, and if you don't keep quiet at once, you'll fly out of the window. Then you can hunt in the gutter for society that is good enough for you."

Kunigunde now remained silent, but though she did not speak, she shut her eyes to show that she wished to have nothing to do with anything that was going on around her. Aennchen did not take any notice of her defiant sulking, left her lying in the corner, and entertained the three modest dolls with coffee and cakes, which they enjoyed, while Kunigunde received neither drop nor crumb.

Just at that time Aennchen's foster sister, her old nurse's daughter, had been very ill and was beginning to recover. While the sickness was serious, Aennchen had not been allowed to see her. Now, after several weeks, she was permitted to go into the sick room for the first time. The two little girls threw their arms around each other's necks, and rejoiced that they could be together again.

The foster sister had heard, from her mother, that Aennchen had had a wonderful doll on her birthday, and she was very curious to see it. Aennchen instantly ran to her room and, with some difficulty, dragged Kunigunde to the bedside. At the sight of her, the foster sister uttered a little cry, exclaiming: "Oh, she really is too beautiful! I never thought there were such lovely dolls."

"Do you admire her so much?" asked Aennchen.

"More than I can tell," replied her foster sister, her eyes wandering from Kunigunde's velvet and lace hat to her satin cloak, and from her silk gown to her necklace.

"Would you like to have her?" Aennchen went on. The foster sister did not dare to answer.

"Say whether you want her," Aennchen urged.

"Oh," replied the child in the bed softly, "surely you are not in earnest. She is too elegant for me. And your mother will not let you."

"My mamma lets me do everything I ask her," cried Aennchen, and ran off as fast as she could go to her mother, to tell her that she wanted to give Kunigunde to her foster sister for a present on her recovery.

She received permission and, highly delighted, re-

turned to the little girl to give her the beautiful doll for her very own.

"You know," she said, "she can open and shut her eyes, and say Papa and Mamma, and all sorts of other things." And she wanted to show her the doll's skill. But Kunigunde kept her eyes obstinately shut, and did not utter a sound.

"Have you suddenly grown deaf and dumb?" cried Aennchen, impatiently, after she had vainly laid her down and sat her up again, shaken and jerked her, squeezed and thumped her.

Kunigunde groaned under this rough treatment, and at last made up her mind to utter the words, "I am not to be given to any servant's child."

This provoking answer made Aennchen furious. "I'll teach you to insult my foster sister," she cried, and threw the haughty doll on the floor with all her strength. There was a rattling sound, the child in bed screamed, Kunigunde squeaked, "Mamma!" The worst had happened. The doll's head was broken; small pieces, to which her beautiful fair hair still clung, were lying on the floor, and the back of Kunigunde's head showed a large, gaping hole.

Aennchen was obliged to tell her mother of the misfortune. Her mother was very angry and scolded her little daughter for her quick temper. As a punishment, she should have no dessert that evening. Aennchen cried, and was still more enraged against Kunigunde, on whose account she was now punished. Her mother spoke of sending the severely wounded doll to a doll surgeon for treatment, and having a new head put on. But Aennchen would not hear of it. "Throw her away," she said; "I don't want to see her any more."

"It will be better so," muttered Kunigunde, who,

though stunned, had heard everything. "I have nothing to expect here except vulgar abuse."

Aennchen perceived that even the hole in her head had not yet taught Kunigunde modesty. Instead of answering, she took her up, stripped off her ornaments, her hat, her rich garments, and her underclothes and, when the



doll lay perfectly naked, she called her nurse and said, "Throw this thing into the garbage can."

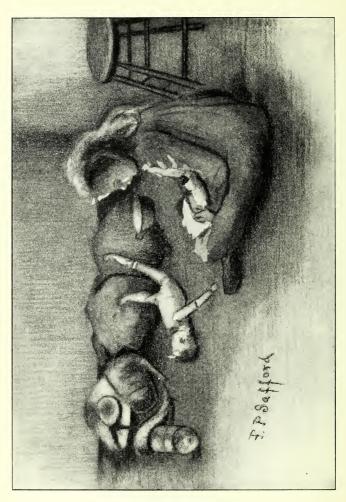
The nurse hesitated, but Aennchen stamped her feet and screamed, "Throw her into the garbage can, I tell you." Then the nurse yielded to her foster child's whim and carried the doll out of her sight.

When Kunigunde again opened her eyes, which until then she had obstinately kept closed, she found herself in a corner of the kitchen, in the deep garbage can, among bones, refuse, and sweepings. This humiliation gave her more pain than the hole in her head, and filled her with great bitterness. She was certain that sharp injustice, a terrible wrong, had been done her. She had been severely injured, robbed of all her property, and thrown into the dirt. And why? Because she would not give up her self-respect. "Very well," she murmured, "you can commit every violence and every crime upon me, for you are stronger than I; but you have not yet been able to force me to associate with people who are beneath me in rank."

The next morning, before the garbage wagon drove by, the rag-picker and his wife came, as usual, to rummage in the can. "Look here!" he exclaimed, when he saw the big doll; "she is dirty and broken, it is true, but the dealer will give something for her."

His wife turned Kunigunde round, and then said: "What we can get for her isn't worth talking about. We'll take the thing to our little one." They did so. Kunigunde was quickly thrown into the sack which the woman carried on her back, and taken to the rag-picker's hut. The bag, as usual, was emptied on the floor, and the little daughter peeped curiously at the contents. Kunigunde, it is true, felt the deepest aversion to the people who had picked her out of the garbage can, the horribly dirty hut in which she found herself, and the ragged, greasy child, to whom she was now to be given; yet in her conceit she imagined that the little girl would be so astonished and delighted at the sight of





"How much prettier you are! I love you far, far better."

her that she would not dare to come near her, and this thought flattered her. So she was deeply offended and humbled, when she was soon forced to see that she made no impression on the rag-picker's child at all. The little girl picked her up, turned her over and over, noticed the hole in her head and the sweepings in the tangled hair which still remained, and only said contemptuously, "I don't care," when her mother asked if she would like to have the doll.

The child owned one doll, which she had made herself, certainly a very odd one. It was a long cork from a claret bottle, which the little girl had dressed in several pieces of cotton rags and scraps of newspaper, tied on with a bit of string. On the piece which appeared above the paper and the rags she had marked, with a lead pencil, two eyes, a nose, and a mouth. This little monster she loved and petted, talked tenderly to it, and pressed it to her heart. When she retired with Kunigunde to a corner of the hut, she laid her on the floor, took out her own cork-stopper doll, kissed it, and said: "Look at this long string of a doll! How much prettier you are! I love you far, far better. I'll tell you what, I'll give her to you for a servant. She is big and strong. She shall carry you out to walk, and do everything that you order her."

She put Kunigunde down, and laid the little scarecrow in her arms. But now it did not suit her that her darling's servant should be naked, and she prepared to dress her. She searched for rags and paper, but all the scraps she found were far too small for the huge Kunigunde. After she had worked in vain for a long time, she grew impatient and cried, "There's nothing to be done with the stupid thing." As she spoke, she struck her so violently against the wall that she broke both of her legs. The child stared at her a moment, then she said: "Now she is dead. We will bury her."

Kunigunde thought that her last hour had come, and she was glad. "I would rather lie under the ground than to be the maid of a horrible cork-stopper," she said to herself. She closed her eyes, that she might not see the dirt and wretchedness surrounding her, and sought consolation for her terrible fate in the remembrance of her former beauty, the wealth of which she had been robbed, and her aristocratic origin, which had really destined her to be the playmate of a princess.

Meantime, the rag-picker's cruel child was preparing to dig a hole in a heap of rubbish behind the hut with the sharp edge of an old sardine box. Her older brother found her busy at this work, and when, in reply to his question, he learned that she was making a grave for the ill-treated doll, which lay with closed eyes and broken limbs, he said: "You can't dig so large a grave as this big creature needs. Come, we'll throw the ugly wretch into the water."

They at once set off together for the bridge which crossed the river near by. "One, two, three," cried

the boy, and flung Kunigunde far over the railing. The little girl looked after her, pressed her cork-stopper doll to her heart, and said lovingly, "I don't want any doll except you."

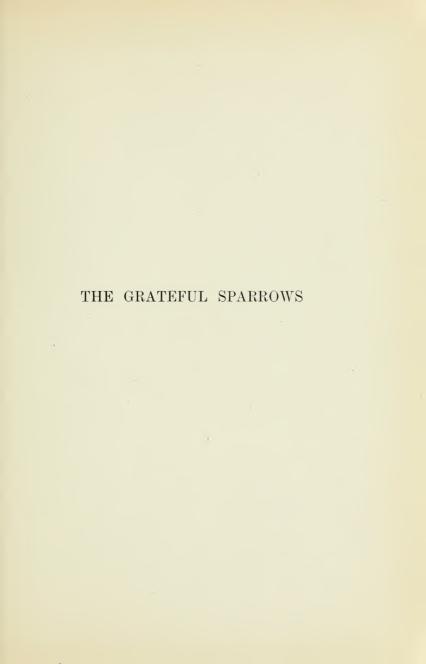
Kunigunde had considered it a last happiness that she was not to be buried alive, but drowned, for this seemed to her a quicker and painless end. "Now all will be over. These good-for-nothing human beings were not worthy to possess so noble a creature as I," she thought, as she fell into the water and sank nearly to the bottom.

But all was not over. She did not drown, but was borne to the surface again and floated gently down the stream. She opened her eyes and, in spite of the hole in her head, in spite of her broken limbs, in spite of her beggary, her courage revived. Then she suddenly felt sharp teeth seize her. A large water rat caught her by one foot and dragged her to its nest, which was on the shore, close beside the water. In it was a litter of young rats, who wanted to play with the doll drifting in the river. They all came out of the hole and swarmed around the doll which their mother had brought. The thought darted through Kunigunde's broken head, "I would not play with a servant's child, and now I must serve these vermin for a toy!" This thought gave her such anguish that she grew unconscious and died.

Death came at the right time to spare her the worst

suffering. The young rats wanted to drag her into their hole, the entrance was too small, and when the horrible animals had pulled her to and fro a long time in vain, they grew angry and began to tear her to pieces with their teeth. They ate all the parts of her which were made of kid and filled with bran, and the china portions found their last resting place on the bottom of the river.

This was the sorrowful end of the proud Kunigunde. Aennchen's three modest dolls, on the contrary, fared well with their friend. They stayed with her until Aennchen became a tall, beautiful young lady, and when she married and had a little girl herself, she gave her three faithful playmates, that they might afford the child as much pleasure as they had the mother.





## THE GRATEFUL SPARROWS

ONCE upon a time a little girl, who loved all animals and plants, lived in a house in town with a small garden in front of it. Her older brother was a wild, mischievous lad, like most boys. He liked to catch flies and pull off their wings and legs, put pins through beetles, or tie yarn, wrapped with bits of paper, to their legs, and let them fly away with the burden. When his sister was there, she would not allow such naughty tricks. Although she was the smaller of the two, he was obliged to do what she wanted or she would not speak to him, and the boy could not stand that. She would not let any animal be hurt. Her brother was not even permitted to tread upon the ugly, hairy caterpillars, though they ate the leaves off her bushes and flowers. He had to put them in a piece of paper and carry them into the street.

"But they will die out there just the same," the brother said.

"We need not take care of them," his sister answered; "their parents must do that, or they themselves. But we ought not to kill them."

In the front garden stood four trees, in whose branches many sparrows had built their nests. They could not

be called pleasant neighbors. They soiled the fence along the street, and the door, and the ground under the trees, so that the maid-servant had hard work to keep the entrance clean, and she scolded about the dirty sparrows, and often threatened to beat down their nests with her broom stick. In the warm season of the year, they woke very early, long before sunrise. and made a deafening noise for an hour or more. There was such a hopping and fluttering, and flying to and fro, such greeting and quarrelling, chattering and scolding, that it seemed like a school of children at recess. The father of the little girl and boy, who was a light sleeper, was regularly roused by the noise made by the birds, and grew so angry over it that he talked of buying a rifle and killing all the sparrows without mercy. In the spring, when the grass and the flower-beds were sowed, they ate the seeds out of the earth, so that there was the greatest trouble in protecting the seed by scarecrows and threads woven around short wooden pegs stuck into the ground. Everybody had some grievance against the sparrows, and the poor birds had not a single friend in the house except the little girl, who pleaded for them whenever her father and the maidservant wanted to vent their anger upon them.

She did not rest satisfied with defending the sparrows against the just indignation of the members of the household. She showed them other favors. In the summer they fared well. Then they could find food everywhere.

They only needed to fly out into the street, or a marketplace, to fill their little stomachs with the nicest things. But the winter was a hard time for them. Then they sometimes suffered such bitter want that they came

to the windows and pecked on the panes with their beaks, begging piteously for a few crumbs. Ever since the little girl had been large enough to understand what the birds wanted, when they crowded around the windows in this way, she always fed them. During the cold season, she swept the snow off the windowsill and scattered bread crumbs and seeds, on holidays even bits of



apple, raisins, and sugar, then she closed the windows and pressed her little nose against the panes, to see how her feathered guests liked the meal. In time they grew used to thinking that the sill outside the little girl's room was their ever ready table, and did not hesitate to remind their friend by pecking impatiently on the panes, if she delayed giving them their breakfast.

Her brother thought this was very saucy. "The impudent sparrows," he said, "to act as if we owed them something."

"We do owe them something," answered the little sister, "for we are rich and they are poor; we are strong and they are weak; we are big and they are little."

Her brother was not to be convinced. "They are good for nothing," he muttered.

"It's fun to watch their merry play," said his sister. "Besides, who can tell whether they may not be good for something?"

She continued her kindness to her little protégés. She put bread crumbs, soaked in milk, into the beak of a young sparrow which had left the nest rather too early and stayed crouching in a corner of the window-sill, because he could not fly away, and made a soft bed for him with cotton-wool in a box, so that he would be comfortable until his mother came and took the halffledged runaway home. Another time the house cat was watching on the wall under the window-sill, and, when the sparrows came to be fed, she made a great leap and caught one of the birds by the wing. The others scattered with cries of fright, the captured sparrow peeped piteously in the cat's mouth, and thought its last hour had come. But the little girl had seen the whole from the window, hastily seized a ruler which lay near, and gave the cat such a blow on the paw, that she had to open her mouth to mew with pain. The sparrow

took advantage of it to fly away, and the cat, punished and ashamed, could do nothing except steal off limping on one forefoot.

A third time a naughty boy in the street was throwing stones at the birds' nests in the trees behind the fence. The little girl ran down at once, and reproached him for his bad behavior. But when he would not listen to her, only mocked at her and went on throwing them, she screamed so loudly for help that the maid-servant came out of the kitchen, and even a policeman from the street, and drove the naughty boy away.

As the little girl attended to the sparrows every day, watched them on the window-sill, and listened while they chattered, jested, and quarrelled with one another, she gradually learned to understand their language. This is not so difficult as people suppose, because the sparrows have only a few words, and they talk about very simple things, which most grown-up persons have forgotten, but which a child knows very well. The little girl could listen for hours while one mother sparrow told tales about another, praised all her own children, made fun of the wise old sparrows, and talked of the dainties they had stolen from the fruit women in the market-place. She even tried to talk the sparrow language herself, that she might share their conversation, and ask all sorts of things; but she could not make the high tones of their twittering and peeping, so she was obliged to be satisfied with listening.

One day the whole family went to a fair, which was held in a meadow outside of the city. There were a great many booths and side-shows, and an enormous crowd of people, who pressed around the jugglers, clowns, and merry-go-rounds. A dealer in a strange, perhaps Oriental costume was loudly offering lozenges for sale. They were beautifully colored and looked tempting enough, so the little girl begged for some, for she was fond of sweets. Her mother did not want to buy them; she did not like the dealer's crafty brown face. "Who knows what the stuff is?" she said. But the father answered, "You are over-anxious," and bought a lozenge for his little daughter, and one for his son, too, that he might not be jealous.

The little girl was just putting the lozenge into her mouth, when a sparrow suddenly darted down upon her, straight at her hand, so that she was startled and dropped the candy. The bird caught it skilfully in the air, and flew away with it. The little girl looked after it with her mouth wide open, hardly knowing how it had been done. But her brother laughed, saying: "Now you see! That's the way with your dear sparrows. Shameless thieves and nothing else." But the little girl would hear nothing against her protégés, and declared it was her own fault—she had awkwardly dropped the lozenge out of her hand. She asked for another, but it was impossible to reach the dealer, the crowd was so great that they could not get through

it. She looked ready to cry, and her brother goodnaturedly offered her his own lozenge. She took it, but just as she was lifting it to her lips, a sparrow again darted at her hand and pecked her forefinger so hard with its beak that she uttered a cry of pain and opened her hand. The bird seized the lozenge and vanished with it before the little girl and her relatives had recovered from their astonishment.

The father was expressing his surprise at the extraordinary boldness of city sparrows, when suddenly there was a great shouting and running to and fro in the crowd. They asked what had happened, and, after some time, learned that many children who had eaten the brown-skinned dealer's lozenges had been taken ill. The candy was colored with poisonous things, and those who had eaten it were writhing in pain and in danger of their lives. The crowd wanted to kill the rascally dealer, but he took to flight. People pursued him with loud shouts, there was a great tumult, and the little girl's parents had the utmost trouble in escaping with their children from the confusion. They hurried on along the road, to find a free space where there were no more booths and the throng was less dense; but the little girl could not keep step with her father; she had to run, and, stumbling over a stone, fell on the ground. Her mother sprang forward to lift her up, when, behind the child lying in the road and her parents, cries of terror were heard, and they saw a frightened horse come dashing toward them at full gallop. The next instant the foaming animal must have trampled upon the group. It seemed as if nothing could save them. At the last moment, when the hot breath of the frantic creature was already fanning the face of the terrified father, a sparrow flew suddenly straight at the horse's right eye with so much force that the animal neighed loudly with pain, reared high in the air, and made such a spring aside, that it lost its balance, rolled in the ditch, and was caught by the people who came running up.

The little girl, in spite of her fright, had seen very well what the sparrow had done, and said, "So the sparrows are good for something." But the others were so benumbed in every limb by fear that they did not answer. All the pleasure of the fair had been destroyed by the excitement, and they decided to go home. Unless they went a very long way round, they were obliged to return past the booths, and enter the crowd. The little girl stopped an instant to look at a big picture of wild beasts, giraffes, and elephants, which hung in front of a show where animals were exhibited, and when she looked around, she discovered that she had been separated from her family by the throng. She was very much frightened, and tried to run forward to overtake them. But the crowd stood like a wall before her on every side, and she could not pass. She pushed against the people among whom she was wedged, the rough men pushed back, and the little girl began to cry bit-



"The little girl stopped an instant to look at a big picture of wild beasts."



terly, partly because she was hurt, partly because it frightened her to be all alone, among so many strangers. Then a hand clasped hers and drew her quickly and skilfully out of the throng in front of the animal show, where she was penned. She looked up and saw through her tears an old dame with a brown face and rough gray hair, who resembled the rascally lozenge seller, and said in a harsh voice and foreign accent: "Come, little one, come with me quick. Don't be afraid!"

"Where?" asked the little girl, timidly, trying to stop.

"Come, come," repeated the old woman, who looked like a witch. "Away from here. Out of the crowd. Then I will take you home. To your parents."

When the little girl heard of her parents, she followed willingly. Yet it seemed to her that the old woman was not leading her toward the city, but in the opposite direction.

"We don't live there," she said, "but on the other side!"

"I know, I know," replied the old woman. "We are going to my cart. It's too far for you to walk home."

In a few minutes they reached a cart, which stood by the side of the road. It was a queer old vehicle, with a faded cover made of darned linen, drawn by two little nags, which were so thin that their bones seemed to be coming through their skins. The little girl would not get in, so the brown witch seized her quickly round the waist, lifted her like a light bundle, flung her into the cart, and jumped in after her. The little girl called for help, but the cart was filled with men and women, and little half-naked brown children, who all began to scream louder still, so that her voice was not heard at all. At the same time the old witch urged up the half-starved horses, and the rattling cart rolled off in the midst of a cloud of dust with astonishing speed.

The little girl had fallen into the power of a band of gypsies, who wanted to carry her away. When she began to cry bitterly, the old witch said to her: "Keep still. No harm will befall you. You will fare well with us. You shall have nice things to eat, and a gown with gold spangles. You shall learn to dance and tell fortunes, and always have plenty of fun. So be quiet."

The little girl did not know what to do. Drawing back into the farthest corner of the cart, she wept silently, thinking of her parents and her brother, who were now searching for her so anxiously.

The gypsy band must have done a good business at the fair. Men and women were drinking from big bottles of wine, singing, laughing, and talking in a strange language. They soon stopped in a wood, where they lighted a fire and prepared a camp for the night. They cooked in large kettles an ample meal, and wanted to give the little girl some of it, too; but, though she was very hungry, she refused with disgust.

After the wild, brown vagabonds had finished their supper, they all lay down to sleep, some around the fire, others under the cart, the women and children in it. The little girl was obliged to get in, too, and lie beside the other children; but she kept awake, and when she saw that all were in a sound slumber, she rose softly, climbed down from the cart, slipped out of the circle of snoring gypsies, and began to run as fast as her little legs would carry her, until she was so far from the gypsy camp that she could no longer see the light of their camp-fire. Then she stopped for breath and found herself in the midst of a dark wood, where she did not know which way to turn. She dared not call out, so she sat down in the thick moss at the foot of a tall tree and began to cry piteously.

Suddenly she heard a small voice at her side, twittering in the well-known sparrow language: "Don't cry, friend. Come. Follow me."

"Who are you?" asked the little girl, also in the sparrow language, which she tried to speak as plainly as possible.

"Oh, how stupid you human beings are!" was the merry answer. "Don't you know me? I am your neighbor, and you feed me every day."

"Indeed!" cried the little girl, joyously, putting out her hand to her feathered friend.

But the sparrow fluttered quickly away. "Don't touch me," it chirped; "we don't like that. But now

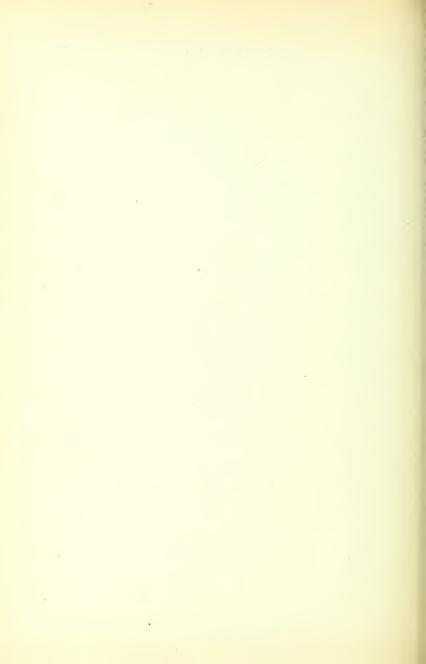
let us go home. I'll fly very slowly. Keep your eyes on me."

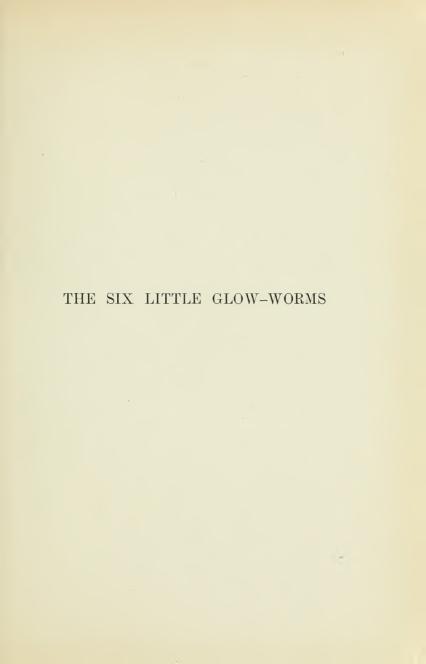
The bird fluttered in front, just at the height of her head, and the little girl followed trustfully. There were a few stumbles and falls in the darkness, a few bumps and bruises, but, after half an hour's walk, she came out of the woods into the high-road, and then it was easy to move forward. Near the city she met a policeman, who was very much astonished to find a little girl alone on the road so late at night, and questioned her. She told him the whole story, her name, and where she lived, and the worthy man took her by the hand and led her home.

Her parents, who had been searching for her in vain for hours, and notified the police without finding any trace of their missing child, had not gone to bed, and were sitting in despair around the table, vainly trying to comfort each other. When, long after midnight, the policeman rang and brought back their little daughter, there was such rejoicing that the whole neighborhood was roused. The sparrow which had guided the girl back was perched on the window-sill, gazing through the panes into the room, flapping its wings and twittering at the joy of the parents, who could not stop kissing their recovered child, although she was very tired and only wanted to go to bed.

The father was very grateful to the sparrows for having saved his little daughter's life three times in one day.

The next morning he made a regular feast for them. On every window-sill in the whole house he spread cakes and raisins, fruit and honey, and the sparrows came and banqueted, and invited their friends and relatives from far and near. There was a great fluttering and chirping, twittering and screaming, but nobody complained of it. And, from that time, food was always scattered for the house sparrows and strangers, too, and human beings and sparrows remained the best of friends to the end of their lives.







## THE SIX LITTLE GLOW-WORMS

During the June nights the meadow at the edge of the forest was as merry as a peasant wedding or a country fair. The nightingales sang, the crickets chirped, the plover drummed, the night wind whistled, old May and young June bugs lay in their taverns in the grass, the bushes, and the foliage of the trees, and drank dew till they were full, and even the sober ladybugs, which usually lead no gay lives, were persuaded to share the lively meetings of the idlers. As soon as it grew dark, the six little glow-worms that lived in the meadow crept out of their tiny room in the earth and lighted their lanterns, so that the place was brightly illuminated by their shining, bluish white light. So, when the revellers broke up at as late an hour as possible, thanks to their living lamps, they found their way as easily and safely as if it had been noonday, without striking against roots and stones, or falling into moleburrows. Then, standing in front of the glow-worms, they cheered them with their hoarse throats, and sang this little verse:—

"Little worm, that kindly lights
The reveller's steps in the dark nights,
As to his home he gropes his way,
Our thanks we pay! Our thanks we pay!"

The little glow-worms said nothing, only let their light shine softly. They were indulgent to the harmless gayety of the revellers, and enjoyed the merry life which surrounded them during the short festival season of the year.

Not far from the meadow, where there were such gay doings, stood an old castle with a lofty tower. Here lived an aristocratic owl family, with a numerous colony of bats for servants. The mistress of the house, an owl of mature years, was a very learned lady, who had one son, whom she urged to study. But the young gentleman was an idler and sluggard, who would rather wander about than learn. Whenever he could, he stole away from his books and slipped out of the tower, to rob nests, catch birds, or, with the young noblemen from the owl-eyries in the neighborhood, join in hunting hares and marmots.

This troubled his mother greatly, and she remonstrated earnestly with him.

"The examination is close at hand, and you are not preparing yourself. Do you mean to disgrace me by failing?"

The young owl obstinately remained silent and looked sulky.

"Answer me, you unmannerly scapegrace!" cried the owl, angrily. "What am I to do with you? All your ancestors are lights of learning and members of the academy. You alone wish to remain an idle, ignorant blockhead. Are not you ashamed of your-self?"

"It isn't my fault," replied the owl nobleman, defiantly.

"Not your fault?" asked the owl in astonishment. "Whose fault is it, then?"

"Why, Mamma," cried the youth, boldly, "do have some consideration. When am I really to study? During the day, as a member of a respectable owl family, I must sleep, and at night it is so dark in this confounded lumber room that I can't see a line. I'm near-sighted already. If I must strain my eyes over my books in this pitch-black darkness, I shall be blind entirely."

"What nonsense are you talking?" replied the owl, sternly. "We have lived here a hundred years and more, and no one ever complained of our home before. They all found it comfortable. On moonlight nights, it is almost too light and, when the moon doesn't shine, you have our roof cat, by whose eyes you can read easily."

The youth remained obstinate. "Pardon me, Mamma," he said defiantly. "There are so few clear moonlight nights that they don't count, and our cat's eyes may have been enough for our ancestors, but in our days of electricity it is no light at all. Besides, we have so much more to learn now than you did in old times. So either give me some decent light, or

don't complain if I cannot prepare for my examinations."

And, without waiting for his mother's answer, the rude youth vanished through the tower window, to amuse himself with his companions in the usual way and let study alone.

The owl called the oldest of her bats, and said anxiously: "There is no living with the young people any longer. Hasn't my good-for-nothing son taken it into his head that it isn't light enough here, and therefore he cannot study?"

"Foolish talk, Mrs. Professor," squeaked the bat.

"I know that just as well as you do," answered the owl; "but I must not let him have the excuse for his idling. What shall we do to get a better light for the lazy fellow?"

"Our roof cat—" began the bat.

"Isn't enough," interrupted the owl. "Between ourselves: it really is a dim light, and I wonder whether our eyes are not constantly growing worse because, up to this time, we have been satisfied with our cat's light. We must find something else."

The bat reflected a little while, then she said: "How would it do to try glow-worms, Mrs. Professor? They give a good, steady light, do not heat the head, and are not dangerous on account of fire."

"A clever idea," said the owl. "Bring some here as soon as possible."

The bat obediently flew away and hurried to the meadow on the edge of the forest, where the spring festival was in full course. From all the tree-tops, bushes, and grasses echoed the notes of fiddles, the sound of flutes, and merry drinking songs; everywhere there was dancing, playing, and dew drinking, and the little glow-worms, with quiet pleasure, held the light for these gay doings. Without troubling herself in the least about the company, the owl's faithful servant seized one of the glow-worms with her teeth, and carried it in a swift flight to the tower, where she put it on a beam. It was trembling in every limb with fright, and in its terror almost let its lantern go out.

The owl looked at the little creature closely, and said discontentedly, "This light, too, is not enough."

"No, Mrs. Professor," replied the bat; "it shone far more brightly in the meadow outside. These glowworms are queer creatures. Alone they are not good for much. There must be several of them together. Then the rascals want to outshine one another, each tries to do his best, and the result is something very acceptable."

"Then get several," ordered the owl.

The bat called her relatives, they went to the meadow together and brought away the other five glow-worms. When all six sat side by side on the beam in the tower, they were so glad that no harm had happened to them, and that they were together again, that they quickly forgot their fright, and let their lanterns shine with full brilliancy. The walls of the tower chamber glittered and sparkled as if they were hung with silver cloth and adorned for a royal festival. It was a very beautiful sight, which pleased even the bat, though usually she cared little for wealth and magnificence.

"Wonderfully pretty," she said; "but too dazzling. I could not bear it long."

"Nor I, either," answered the owl, sighing. "But what can we do? The young folks will have it so."

The six little glow-worms shone conscientiously until the approach of dawn, then they turned off their light, crept close to one another on the beam, fell asleep, tired out, and dreamed of the merry fair, from which they had been stolen to serve in the owl tower.

When the first flush of dawn was appearing in the sky, the young owl returned, laid a hare at his mother's feet, and wished her a pleasant sleep.

"Very well, you idler," she muttered before she went to her bed. "You shall have a surprise to-night."

In fact, when darkness came, the owl went to the lie-a-bed and shouted into his ear: "Get up, you sluggard. Up with you quick, and go to work!"

The young owl opened his eyes, but instantly shut them again to escape the glare which met him. The six little glow-worms had lighted their lanterns, and were shining as brightly as they could.

"Now you can no longer tell me that you cannot see

plainly enough," the owl went on. "I have given you a light which will make your eyes water. Now bring your books, and study steadily."

The young owl was obliged to get up, whether he liked it or not. He made his toilet, ate something, and sat down with his books. But he had no love for study, and only waited until his mother, accompanied by two young bats, flew away to attend to some business. Then he went quickly to the little glow-worms, and said in a subdued voice, yet very impressively: "You vagabond lantern-bearers, what do you want here? Who sent for you? If you don't put out your worthless eyespoilers, I'll break your bones for you."

The little glow-worms were terribly frightened, and lowered their light almost entirely, so that it only glimmered very faintly. But the bat, who, in her corner, had seen and heard all this, shot out, hissing: "Just wait, sir, I will tell your mother about this. And you glow-worms will turn up your light again at once, or you'll have to deal with me."

The little glow-worms did not know what to do. The young owl threatened their lives if they shone, and the bat if they put their light out. But they understood that the young owl had more authority here than the bat, and the bravest of them summoned courage to say to him, as he stood before them with angry eyes and ruffled feathers: "My young lord, we should be very glad to obey you, if we only could. We did not

come here voluntarily. Your servants dragged us by force from our home and family. We would like nothing better than to return to our own people. But how are we to get out of this terrible high tower, and reach the earth? We can never do it alone. Help us, my young lord, and we will be grateful to you all our lives."

The young owl was a rough fellow, yet he had a kind heart. He pitied the frightened glow-worms, and did not want to throw them out of the tower window. Besides, he was afraid of his mother, who would certainly ask where they were.

He drove the old bat rudely back into her corner, and said softly to the trembling little glow-worms: "Now pay attention to me. When my mother comes home, summon up your courage and declare a strike. My mamma is a little severe in her language, but she will do you no harm. She doesn't eat things like you. I hope she will drive you away, and then I will carry you home."

Things happened just as the sly fellow had planned. When the owl came back, she found the room perfectly dark, and the six little glow-worms were visible only as faint, bluish sparks.

"What does this mean?" shricked the owl, angrily. The bat was rushing out of her corner, but the young owl flew to her side and whispered fiercely, "Hold your tongue, or it will cost you your life!" then, hurrying back to the glow-worms, he hissed: "Go on now! Be brave!"

The glow-worm which had spoken before again began, "Pardon us, Baroness, we cannot shine."

"Why not, you lazy rabble?" cried the owl, fiercely.

"Because we get nothing to eat and drink," replied the glow-worm, boldly.

"H'm," said the owl rather perplexed. She had not thought of that before, and could not deny that the glow-worm was right. "What do you want?"

"Four meals a day, at each meal twelve fat plant-lice and a pint of fresh dew. That is what we are used to. Then a soft moss bed with thyme in the pillows, and permission to go out twice a week — or we can do nothing."

"You shall be choked first, you gluttons," cried the owl, in the greatest rage. "Here, Bat, break these blockheads' necks! Eat them all."

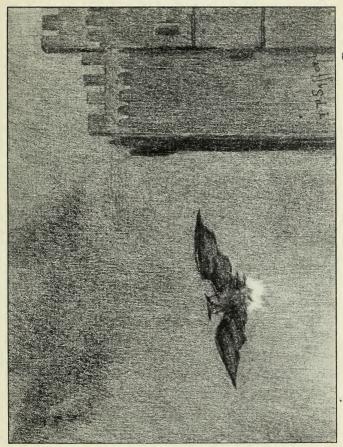
"Out with your lights!" whispered the young owl to them quickly, while the bat was flying as fast as possible to obey her mistress's orders.

The little glow-worms instantly put out their lanterns, and were now perfectly invisible in the dark room, so that even a sharper-sighted creature than the half-blind bat could not have found them.

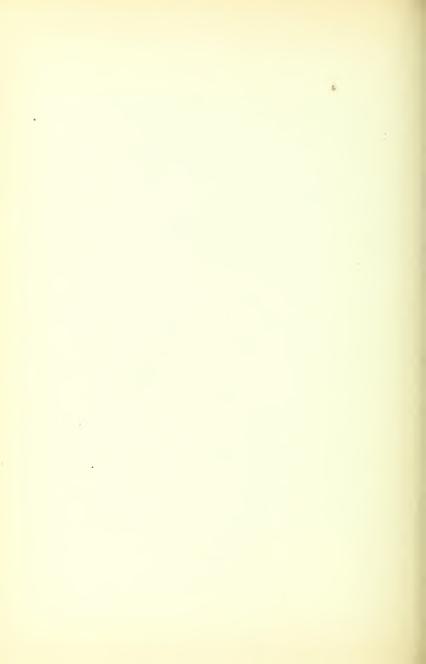
"Quick! Sit on my claws, each on one toe," said the young owl, very softly. They crawled and crept, as fast as they could, upon the owl's feet, which he had placed on the beam, and when he felt that they were all clinging fast with their little thin, weak legs, he sailed noiselessly out of the tower window. Outside in the open air, when they knew that they were out of danger, all the glow-worms lighted their lanterns and shone with all their power, so that the young owl, in his flight, looked like a wonderful shining constellation. On reaching the meadow at the edge of the forest, the rough fellow shook his travelling companions from his claws with a sudden movement, because it was disagreeable to him to feel their little thin legs on his toes, and went off without any word of farewell.

The glow-worms fell to the ground from a considerable distance, and were somewhat bruised. But the pleasure of being again at home with their relatives was greater than the pain. They were greeted with universal rejoicing, for it had been very dull on the meadow since the bats had carried away their living lanterns. The night festival had been interrupted, all the revellers wanted to hurry home and, in doing so, some had fallen into pools and were drowned, others had stumbled over roots and stones, and broken their legs or even their necks, and cries of pain and groans had followed the merry songs. When the revellers now had their usual light once more, the fiddles and flutes sounded gayly, old and young May and June beetles, crickets, and grasshoppers, and even the sober ladybugs, danced around the six little glow-worms, singing joyously: -

> "How we have missed your shining spark, When, wand'ring through the nights so dark,



"The young owl, in his flight, looked like a wonderful shining constellation."



We've broken limbs on paths astray, And drowned in pools beside the way. But now we have you here once more— 'Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!' we roar!"

After this trial the owl gave up her effort to make her son a learned man. She let him become a hunter, and in this career, for which he had inclination and talent, he advanced so far that his mother, after all, was satisfied with him.



THE DWARF'S SPECTACLES



## THE DWARF'S SPECTACLES

MICHEL was a good lad. He was the only son of a widow, who, after her husband's early death, was left alone with him and two little girls. By great sacrifices she had brought up her three children, kept them warm and clean, sent them to school, and educated them. Michel, from his tenth year, had faithfully helped her. At first he had picked up dung on the highway and caught cockchafers, for which the parish paid him a few pennies a quart. Then he had tended sheep and helped to gather the fruit at harvest time. When he was sixteen, he went into a farmer's service, and from that hour, he not only supported himself but also aided his mother and sisters. Several years after, both the girls married, one the village carpenter, the other the schoolmaster; for, in spite of their poverty, they were known and respected by all the villagers for their modesty, their beauty, and their clever brains.

One Sunday, soon after his younger sister's marriage, Michel went to his mother and said: "Mother, I am twenty-one years old, tall and strong, and skilful in all farm work. Without praising myself, there is not a farm hand for ten miles around who can make a

straighter furrow or build so good a hay-rick as I, to say nothing of mowing, threshing, and cattle tending."

"I know that, my boy," replied the widow, somewhat surprised by this speech; "but why do you tell me this?"

"Because I have determined to see a little of the world. I want to go on my travels."

"Stay in the country and support yourself honestly," warned the mother.

"I can accomplish nothing here," Michel answered.
"In foreign countries I shall learn all sorts of things, save something, and if I have good luck, in time I shall rule as owner on my own farm."

"That would be fine, surely," murmured the mother; "but it is not easy."

"Nothing in this world is easy, at least for people like us," said Michel; "but I can try hard things, too; I have the bones for it."

The mother could not help admitting that he was right, though it was hard for her to part from her good son. In order not to be alone, she moved into the house of her daughter, the carpenter's wife, and Michel promised always to send her money, whenever he had any to spare. His master, the farmer, gave him three gold coins, his brother-in-law, the schoolmaster, a knapsack and a hymn-book, his brother-in-law, the carpenter, a stout knotted stick, and his mother her blessing, to take with him on his way. Thus equipped, after a touching leave-taking with his family, he left

his village one sunny autumn morning and set forth into the wide world. After some time a fellow joined him on the highway and, when they had exchanged greetings, asked: "Where did you come from, and where are you going? To what country do you belong? What is your trade, and what is your name?"

Michel answered frankly, only he could not say where he should go. He would follow his nose, he thought, and it would lead him somewhere. The fellow laughed and replied: "Join me, then. I am a better guide than your nose. I am a printer, have wandered over the world, and know something about nearly everything. That comes from education, my dear fellow. One learns more behind the compositor's case than behind the ox-plough."

"All due respect to your education," said Michel, raising his eyebrows, "but I'm content with the plough. It can always stand beside your case without shame."

"You are right, Brother," replied the printer; "the man who will have nothing said against his trade is a fine fellow. Have you been in the city yet?"

"No," said Michel.

"That's fine," cried the printer, "I'm at home in the city and will show you everything. You are lucky to have fallen in with me. For in town one must open one's eyes and keep a sharp watch, unless one wants to be cheated at every corner. Tell me, Brother, have

you any money? For in the city you must pay well. There it's nothing for nothing."

Michel unsuspiciously took his three gold coins from his pocket and showed them to the printer. The other hastily pulled out a few silver pieces and dirty scraps of paper, held them before Michel's face a moment, and said, "This is my money; as you see, I am richer than you." The truth was that Michel had seen nothing distinctly, for he had no skill in counting money. "Give me your yellow boys," the printer went on; "we will put our cash together and make one purse. Then you'll be sure that none of the city thieves will rob you."

This suited Michel. He gave his three gold coins to the printer and the two walked on, talking merrily, until they reached the city. Going into a tavern, they drank what was good and dear. In the afternoon, the printer showed Michel the sights of the city, and in the evening they had a fine meal of beer and sausage. When it grew late, the printer said: "Now we'll stop work. I will take a separate room. You, I suppose, are an early riser. I like to stay a long time in bed, if I am not obliged to get up. You would wake me, if we slept in the same room. So, good night, Brother Michel."

The next morning, according to his habit, Michel rose with the cocks, went to the coffee room, and said to the tavern-keeper, who was also there, "I suppose my companion is still in bed?"

"Why, no," replied the host, "he is earlier than you. He started half an hour ago, and left his regards for you."

"What!" cried Michel, startled. "He has gone?"

"Yes, indeed, bag and baggage!" answered the tavern-keeper.

"But my money?" shrieked Michel, turning pale.

The tavern-keeper knew nothing about it.

Michel told him how he had given his gold to the printer, and the innkeeper grew almost angry at his story. "What a simpleton you are!" he exclaimed, "it serves you just right; you are more stupid than a new-born calf. You have paid your apprentice money. At least let it be a warning to you for the future. But you can't stay here, if you have no money. I give nothing on credit."

Michel was obliged to pack his knapsack, and leave the inn and the city with an empty stomach.

As he wandered sorrowfully along the highway, he saw at some distance a pear tree, full of ripe fruit, at whose foot a man sat on the ground, with his back resting against the trunk, smacking his lips over the juicy pears, a whole heap of which he had piled beside him.

This man was an ill-looking fellow. He was bare-footed, very ragged, uncombed, and unwashed. But Michel's stomach was complaining, his mouth watered, and he involuntarily stopped in front of him.

"Will you join me?" asked the barefooted fellow, grinning.

"Gladly, for I have had nothing to eat to-day," replied Michel, taking several pears.

"Where are you from, and what are you doing?" asked the shabby fellow.

Michel told him frankly his unfortunate adventure with the printer, who had basely robbed him, and complained that he did not know how he was to get on without money.

The tramp had pricked up his ears at Michel's story, and eyed him sharply with a side glance. "Money lost is nothing lost," he said, when the other had finished. "It happens so that we two can now become equally rich. Do you see the poplar tree yonder?" He pointed to a very tall tree, which grew a few steps farther down the road.

"Certainly! What of it?"

"Do you see the magpie's nest in the highest boughs?"

Michel searched for a while with his eyes, and said, "Yes, I see that, too."

"Well, then, the magpie has stolen a large gold chain, set with diamonds, somewhere. I saw her just now as she carried the jewel to her nest. It is lying there still. I wanted to climb up at once and take it away; but I have rheumatism in all my bones from sleeping on the ground so many nights, and I can't manage climb-

ing. But it will be child's play for you. So up with you at once, and fetch the treasure out of the nest."

"Child's play — that's saying a great deal," muttered Michel, measuring with his eye the height of the tree. "And besides, the chain doesn't belong to us. We must give it back to the owner."

"Of course," cried the tramp. "Do I look like a thief? But, at any rate, we can demand the reward, and that is something."

Michel hesitated no longer. He took off his knapsack, rested his stick against the pear tree, and was beginning to climb the poplar.

"Hold on," said the tramp, "that won't do. You must take off your coat and boots, too, or you'll never get to the top."

Michel knew that this was true. He pulled off his handsome new boots, removed his nice cloth coat, folded them neatly according to his custom, laid both beside his knapsack, and said: "Take good care of them for me. I have nothing else in the world."

"Depend upon it, Brother, depend upon it," cried the barefooted tramp, rubbing his dirty hands together with a grin.

Michel began to climb the tall poplar. He was strong and skilful, but it was a hard piece of work. At last, however, he reached the nest, and peered in with the greatest curiosity. There were four half-fledged magpies, which made a great outcry, flapped their wings violently, and pecked his hand with their yellow beaks, as he felt for the necklace, but there was no sign of a gold chain. He found a safe seat in a forked branch, and called down: "Holloa — you must have dreamed about a gold

chain; there's nothing here but downy feathers — no necklace."

As he received no answer, he parted the branches and looked down. To his horror, he saw that the tramp had disap-

peared, and with him his knapsack, staff, boots, and coat. Gazing into the distance, he discovered him with all the stolen clothes on running along the road far away. "Stop thief!" shouted Michel at the top of his lungs, slipping and jumping down the tree so fast that he ran the risk of breaking his neck. But no living

soul was in sight, no one heard his calls for help, no one stopped the flying thief, and it was useless to follow him, for he had a long start, and a bend in the road soon hid him from Michel's sight.

There stood poor Michel, now barefoot and in his shirt sleeves, with nothing left, not even the cane and hymn-book which his brother-in-law had given him, or the underclothes which his mother had packed in the knapsack. He did not know what to do. Should he go on, or simply turn back and again enter the service of his master, the farmer? But he was too much ashamed to go home in such a plight, after just starting out into the world with such proud hopes, so he determined to try to get work as he was.

He walked sadly on until he came to a broad and tolerably swift stream, across which was a ford. When he went down the bank and was preparing to roll up his trousers and step into the water, he suddenly heard loud weeping, as if from a child. He looked around in surprise, but saw nothing. Yet the crying did not stop, and Michel had too kind a heart not to wish to find the cause of the trouble. He followed the sounds, which seemed to come from a thick clump of willows, and after some searching, discovered a queer little man, with a gray beard, who was trying to hide from him in the moss. Taking up the tiny creature carefully, that he might not hurt him, he said kindly: "Don't be afraid, I will do you no harm. What is the matter, that you are grieving so? Tell me whether I can help you?"

The little man hastily took from a case which hung on his back a pair of horn spectacles, with round blue glasses, as big as he was himself, held them before his eyes, for he could not put them on because his nose was far too small, and gazed intently at Michel. The examination seemed to satisfy him. He folded up the spectacles, put them carefully back in the case again, and said in a weak little voice: "I must cross the river, and I can't, for it is too deep."

Michel's curiosity was roused, and he asked, "What have you to seek on the other side?"

"It would be too long a story to tell you," replied the little man. "In a few words, I can give only this: I belong to a race of dwarfs, which, until now, lived in this neighborhood. But men have grown too wicked, and we cannot stay here any longer. My people have gone and taken their boats with them. I was delayed because I wanted to help a poor woman, who has been kind to me, in gathering some healing herbs. They have left me behind all alone, and now I don't know what will become of me."

"It seems to me," said Michel, "that your dwarf brothers are at least as wicked as men, since they did not trouble themselves about you."

"It is my own fault," wailed the dwarf; "a whole nation cannot wait for one person."

"Shall I carry you across the water?" asked Michel.

"Ah, if you only would do it! Then I should be saved, for on the other shore I could overtake my people."

"Come then, little fellow," said Michel, rolled up his trousers above his knees, took the dwarf in his hand, and waded carefully through the roaring river. When he had reached the opposite bank, he asked the little man: "Shall I carry you farther? You are not heavy."

"No," replied the dwarf, hastily, "just put me on the ground, I can find my way alone now."

Michel obeyed the dwarf's wish. The little fellow took from his back the case with the spectacles, laid it in Michel's hand, and said: "I want to show you my gratitude. We dwarfs have no money. But I will give you these spectacles. When you put them on, you can read the thoughts of men in their heads. You already know how useful that is."

Michel hesitated to accept the gift. "You will need them yourself," he said.

"Take them, take them," replied the dwarf, "we are going to a distant country, where we shall live among ourselves. We dwarfs say what we think, and think what we say. There we shall no longer need the spectacles for reading thoughts. I thank you. Farewell."

Before Michel knew it, the dwarf had vanished, and Michel, who would gladly have talked with him a little longer, searched for him in vain. So he put the blue spectacles into his pocket, and continued his way in a very sorrowful mood. After walking some time, he came to a field of turnips separated from the road by a fence. Before this fence several men, who looked like field laborers, were standing, and behind it a stout man, with the perspiration streaming down his face, was digging up the turnips. The workmen appeared to be laughing at the fat fellow, and the fat fellow was toiling as if he wanted to vent his rage on the earth and

the turnips. Michel, curious to see what was going on, stopped, and the fat man called: "Holloa! do you want to earn a penny instead of staring at these gaping idlers? Then come. There is work enough here for every man."

Michel noticed that the laborers looked at him angrily, and he thought, "something is wrong here." It occurred to him that this was a good chance to try the dwarf's spectacles, and he put them on his nose. The glasses were scarcely before his eyes when the heads of the people appeared to become as transparent as crystal, and he could read their thoughts as plainly as in a book of clear, large type.

In the fat man's head he read: "You seem to be a strong fellow, and very poor; come, work for me, I will pay you as little as possible, and this gang, which refuses to work for my wages, and leaves me in the lurch in the middle of the harvest, will pull long faces. The rascals will probably break your bones because you are spoiling their game, but that's your affair, not mine."

Michel was troubled and turned to the laborers, who were closing round him threateningly. There he read: "What! Does a tramp like you mean to work cheaper here, and serve the rich skinflint for a song? We had brought him to a point where he would be obliged to add a little, and now you cross our plans, and help the rich extortioner against us. May—"

Michel knew enough. "If there is plenty of work here for everybody," he said to the fat man, "then these people have more right to it than I." With these words he turned to go.

"Idler!" shouted the fat man, furiously.

"What!" Michel answered, "you want to rob me of my day's work, and yet call me an idler? For shame, you penny-squeezer!"

The laborers burst into a loud laugh, and one held out his hand to him: "Clasp hands, you are a good fellow. Come and drink a glass of beer with us."

"Willingly," replied Michel, and they all left the fat man standing in his turnip field, and went on together until they came to an inn by the roadside, which they entered. On the way they told him that they were engaged in a struggle about wages with the fat man, who was the richest landowner in the neighborhood, and Michel answered that he needed the day's wages greatly, but he would not take the bread out of their mouths. They now made him tell them how it happened that he was wandering about the world barefoot, and in his shirt sleeves, and pitied him for having been twice outwitted by rascals. So they offered to get him a coat and boots on credit, and obtain work in the neighborhood. Michel was greatly delighted over it, the more so, as he saw through his blue spectacles that their thoughts were sincere, and they meant honestly by him.

In the tavern the laborers ordered food and drink to be set before Michel, and clothed him out of the land-

lord's chests and trunks, so that he no longer looked like a tramp. When he was fitted out and had eaten, he glanced around the room. In one corner he saw at a table three fellows, who sat there silently, pledging each other from time to time in large glasses of brandy. One had squint eyes, the second a nose twisted completely on one side, the third was disfigured by a harelip. They looked so evil, that Michel was horrified, and quickly seized the dwarf's spectacles. He was curious to learn what kind of thoughts lurked behind such ugly faces. What he read in their heads made him shudder. They were all three thinking of nothing except that that night they would break into an old castle near the inn, murder the old countess, her young daughter, and two maid-servants, who were living there alone, while the old count was in attendance at court, and steal all their gold and silver. Behind these thoughts, which he saw with terrible distinctness, he read others a little less clearly. The squint-eyed man was imagining how he would stab the women with his dagger, while they knelt before him begging for mercy. The crooked-nosed man fancied he had a pile of gold, into which he was plunging his blood-stained hands. The hare-lipped man meant to attack his two comrades in their sleep, after the crime had been committed, kill them, and rob them of their share of the booty.

Michel asked himself in horror what he could do to prevent the crime and deliver the wicked fellows to punishment. Tell the laborers what he read in the heads of the three monsters? They would not believe him and perhaps think he was crazy. Go to the police and denounce the scoundrels? But how could he prove what they meant to do? If they denied it, he would stand there like a simpleton, and the police would perhaps take him for a rascal who wanted to fool them. After thinking over the matter for a long time, it seemed to him that he could do nothing except deal with the three rogues all alone.

He agreed to meet the laborers the next morning, at the same inn, to go with them to a place to work, took leave of them, and hurried off in the direction that he supposed the castle stood. After questioning all the shepherds and market women he met on the way, he at last reached a thick forest, and there, in a clearing, was the old castle with its solid walls and small windows.

He knocked at the heavy oak door until it slowly opened a little, and in the crack appeared an aged maid-servant, who asked what he wanted. He begged to see the countess, for whom he had an important message.

He was kept waiting a long while outside the door, but at last the maid came back and sulkily invited him to follow her. Michel went behind her to a little tower room, where the old countess received him. Beside her sat her daughter, a young girl, as beautiful as an angel, whose blue eyes were as friendly as the bright day. Michel felt his heart grow as warm as if sunbeams had entered it, and he could not make up his mind to frighten this lovely creature by his story. He told the countess that he must speak to her alone, and, after a little hesitation, she sent her daughter and the servant out and ordered Michel to deliver his message at once.

"Your ladyship," he said, "three murderers intend to attack your castle to-night, kill you all, and steal your treasures." Seeing her turn pale, he added quickly: "Have no fear, I will remain to defend you and, so long as I have a drop of blood in my body, no one shall harm a hair of your heads."

"One against three—" sighed the countess, anxiously.

"I would fight with five, if I only had weapons."

"There is no lack of arms here," said the countess.

"But would it not be wiser for us to fly to the city at once?"

"The road is long, it is almost dark, and the forest is not safe," replied Michel. "Besides, your flight would not prevent the robbery of the castle."

The countess saw this. She was naturally a brave woman, and Michel's presence somewhat soothed her. She gave him from her husband's weapons a gun, two pistols, and a dagger, ordered a dainty supper to be served for him, sent her daughter and the two maids to bed early, and then kept watch with him in the castle hall. No persuasion from Michel could induce her to go into her tower and protect herself behind locks and bolts. "If I am warned, I can defend myself," she

said firmly, and so it was settled. Just before midnight the countess and Michel, who were listening behind the oak door, heard soft, stealing steps approaching and whispering voices consulting about the best way of breaking into the castle. Various plans were refused,

and at last they agreed that the most nimble robber should climb, by projecting stones, to a window on the

second story, fasten a rope wound about his waist to the cross-bars, and drag the others up.

"Now we have the rascals," Michel whispered into the countess's ear, and ran before her up the stairs into the room whose window the scoundrel meant to enter. With

his gun ready to fire, he waited in the dark until a head appeared above the sill, and then pressed the trigger. A flash, a report, a shriek, a fall, followed one another in an instant. The two robbers who had remained below saw, with terror, their comrade drop at their feet, and turned to fly. Michel and the countess fired at the same time, and saw both fall.

"Hurrah!" shouted Michel, joyously, and, without listening to the countess's warning, he ran down the

stairs, seized a lantern, unbolted the door, and rushed out. At the foot of the castle wall he saw the man with a crooked nose lying with a broken skull, and the one with a hare-lip had a bleeding wound in his breast. The squint-eyed man was not dead. He had received a bullet in the leg, and had fallen, but rose again, and was limping off. Michel pursued him like the wind. But the vagabond suddenly turned and struck fiercely at him with a knife. Michel fired a pistol which stretched the murderer in the grass; then he, too, with the blade in his breast, fell to the earth.

Meanwhile the countess's daughter and the two maids, roused from their sleep by the firing, came hurrying down. The countess called to them that the danger was over, and all four carried the wounded Michel into the castle, without heeding the three ruffians, who lay dead or senseless.

Michel, too, became unconscious after the four women had laid him on a couch. When he came to himself again, many hours had passed since the adventure of the night. A maid had brought a doctor from the city at dawn, and now the count, who had been informed by a messenger of what had happened, also arrived. Michel heard the doctor tell the count that he would recover, and the countess speak with the highest praise of his courage, to which they all owed their lives. He wanted to raise himself and say that he did not deserve so much honor, but they all ordered him in the same breath to say nothing and keep quiet.

It was many days before Michel's wound healed. The countess and her daughter nursed him tenderly, and he was always happy whenever he saw the lovely girl beside his bed. His eyes rested constantly upon her, and when they met hers, a faint flush mounted into her cheeks. He longed to know what was passing through her little head, and asked for his blue spectacles. The countess and her daughter wondered at this desire, and wished to know what use he could have for blue spectacles in a darkened sick room. But he only repeated the request, until they yielded and brought the spectacles. He hastily seized them, put them on with trembling hands, and gazed with all his soul at the white brow of the young countess. He read: "Why does he stare at me so strangely? Has the poor young fellow gone crazy?" And beyond were many half-distinct thoughts, which were something like, "That would be a great pity, for he is such a dear, brave fellow, and I am so fond of him that I wish he would stay here with me till the end of my life."

When he had read this, tears filled his eyes. He took off the glasses, which were dimmed, and did not utter a word. But when the countess left him alone with her daughter, he suddenly seized the lovely girl's hand and said in a trembling voice: "Beautiful Countess, I am only a poor peasant boy, but I love you very, very dearly, and I know that you love me, too, so I dare to ask you, Will you be my wife?"

"Yes, I will," she answered softly, sinking into his arms. So the countess found the young couple when she entered. At first she was very angry, and would not consent to have her only daughter marry a peasant lad. But the young lady said: "I will have him or no one. And if you will not let me marry him, it will break my heart." Then, whether willing or not, the mother was obliged to consent, and even beg the count to give his blessing to the union. Michel was now almost well, so he was again allowed to talk, and the count inquired how he had discovered the plans of the three murderers, two of whom were dead and buried, and the third lay wounded in prison. Michel did not wish to have any secrets from his future father-in-law. He told him about his meeting with the dwarf, who had given him the blue spectacles, and what power these spectacles possessed. The count wanted to try their wonderful magic himself, and was convinced that Michel had not attempted to deceive him.

"You must show the dwarf's spectacles to the king," said the count and, when Michel was allowed to rise, he took him to court with him and presented him to the king, who heard his story with amazement. He, too, put on the spectacles, and looked a long while at the courtiers who surrounded his throne.

"Your most gracious Majesty, I will gladly give you the dwarf's spectacles, if you will accept them from me."

The king slowly shook his head, took them off, and returned them to Michel. "No," he said, "I do not want them. I would rather not be compelled to read the thoughts of men. It does not give happiness. I will even try to forget what I have read. I will appoint you the chief judge of my kingdom. Then you can apply the dwarf's spectacles to a useful purpose."

Michel was now a person of importance, whom even a count would willingly accept for a son-in-law. He brought his mother from the carpenter's home in the village, married the beautiful young countess, moved into a splendid palace in the capital, and performed his duties as chief justice, with the blue spectacles on his nose.

Nobody among the people knew their power, but soon all trembled before it. For through them Michel read the truth in the head of the most hardened criminal and most skilful sharper; no lie could stand before him, and no injustice remained concealed. No innocent person was condemned, and no guilty one escaped punishment; henceforward law and justice reigned throughout the kingdom. Michel was feared by the bad, honored by the good, and praised by all as the wisest man in the whole country, and so it remained to the end of his long life.



## THE GOLDEN BEETLE THAT WENT ON HIS TRAVELS



## THE GOLDEN BEETLE THAT WENT ON HIS TRAVELS

ONCE upon a time there lived in Brazil an Atlas butterfly that was far more beautiful than any which had ever been seen before. Her large wings shimmered with green and pale blue, and when she was flying about in the sunshine one could not tell whether it was a wonderful flower, a jewel set with precious stones and pearls, or the flame of a will-o'-the-wisp fluttering through the air.

In the same forest there lived also brilliant little humming-birds, magnificent large beetles, and friendly parrots. They formed a very haughty society, and associated only with one another and the most aristocratic orchids, around which they daily gathered for a little gossip with the most delicious refreshments. Among them was also a golden beetle of the richest species, that seemed to be made entirely of the precious metal. This golden beetle had been a playmate of the Atlas butterfly, a young lady of noble birth, from her childhood. The two had loved each other very dearly, flew about with each other a great deal, danced together in the sunshine, and charmed every one who saw

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them by their brilliancy and play of colors. It was generally believed in the forest that the golden beetle and the Atlas butterfly were engaged to each other and would be married some day, and there was only one opinion about it, — that they would make a glorious pair.

Then one day it happened that a European appeared in the primeval forest, searching for rare orchids. In his rambles he, too, saw the Atlas butterfly, and at sight of her he neglected the valuable flowers and had eyes only for the marvellously beautiful butterfly. He was on the watch for her at all hours of the day, and eagerly pursued her when he saw her flying by. The monkeys noticed and chattered about it; it came also to the ears of the parrots, who shook their heads, saying that the matter would come to no good end. The hummingbirds thought it advisable to warn the Atlas butterfly that she might be on her guard. But they delayed too long; one noon the butterfly was missing from the meeting; the golden beetle at once flew to the palm tree where the beauty lived, but did not find her at home; all the animals in the forest helped him search, but all was in vain — the Atlas butterfly had vanished.

The golden beetle was not to be comforted. He withdrew into a hollow tree, would neither eat nor drink, and saw no one. The humming-birds came and, to rouse him from his grief, told him that all sorts of things were being said in the forest. It was reported that the Atlas butterfly had eloped with the European

orchid hunter, so he need not grieve for the vain creature. The humming-birds meant kindly. They thought such speeches would console his sorrow, but they only increased his grief. "You lie!" cried the golden beetle violently; "my bride is as good and true as she is beautiful. She would never have left me of her own free will. A scoundrel has certainly captured and dragged her away by force, perhaps even killed her. You are slandering her. Go! I wish to be alone."

An honest but rough Hercules beetle had heard all this. "You are a weak fellow," said the rude giant to the delicate golden beetle. "If you care for your betrothed bride and believe in her faithfulness, don't creep into your hole. Stir yourself. Do something. Search for your Atlas butterfly. Perhaps you will find her."

These words roused the golden beetle a little from his depression. At the next meeting of the fashionable society of the forest, he again appeared, and received proofs of sympathy for his misfortune from all sides. He told a clever parrot what the Hercules beetle had said, and asked what he thought of it.

"The rude fellow is right," said the parrot; "there is really no sense in giving yourself up idly to your despair. You are young, you have your life before you, you are immensely rich; if you make a proper use of your advantages, you can recover your happiness again."

"What is the use of my wealth?" complained the golden beetle; "I cannot buy with my gold my Atlas butterfly if I have lost her."

"No," replied the parrot; "but you can search the world, follow the traces of your betrothed bride, and become united to her again. I'll tell you something. One of our handsomest lories is soon going to Europe. He has obtained a splendid position in one of the zoölogical gardens of the Old World. Put yourself into communication with him. Perhaps you can travel with him. When you are once over there, the rest will take care of itself."

According to the custom of all talkative people, the parrot had considerably exaggerated the truth. The lory had no brilliant position, but had simply been captured and placed in a cage, to be sold to a European zoölogical garden. This bird-cage was hung in the porch of a farm-house at the edge of the forest, until there should be an opportunity to send the valuable bird to the nearest seaport. The golden beetle easily found him, and creeping through the wires of the cage, he asked if he would take him to Europe as a travelling companion?

The lory consented with great pleasure, for now he would have a countryman with whom he could talk all day long. But he advised him to travel incognito, to avoid the plundering to which he would certainly be exposed if he displayed his wealth. The advice was

good, though the parrot had given it solely from vanity. He was afraid that the magnificence of the golden beetle would cast his own rich colors into the shade. The golden beetle cared nothing for appearances. He bought from a spider a gray overcoat, which covered him from his feelers to the end of his body, and allowed no glimpse of his shining gold to be seen. In this plain travelling costume he was perfectly unpretending and attracted no one's eyes. When the lory was taken to the seaport in its cage, it was not noticed that he had a travelling companion, and even the sailors who carried the cage with the gay-plumaged, chattering bird to the ship and stowed it away under the deck, did not notice or did not see the beetle sitting modestly in a corner.

On the journey he fared badly. He was terribly seasick, and a seasick beetle is a sorry spectacle, even if he is a golden beetle. The ship was swarming with cockroaches, which made their way into the cage, carried on the most careless housekeeping in it, and, in spite of his proud reserve, treated the golden beetle with the most unpleasant familiarity, as if he were one of themselves. But he patiently endured the vulgarity of the coarse, dirty brown, evil-smelling fellows, thinking constantly of his beautiful Atlas butterfly, for whose sake he exposed himself to all this discomfort.

The sea voyage lasted three weeks, then the steamer ran into the harbor, the parrot was taken out and carried to the zoölogical garden, where henceforth, with a thin metal chain fastened to one foot, attached to a shining brass ring, he was to live in the midst of a noisy throng of lories, cockatoos, and other parrots. When he was taken out of his cage, the lory said to the golden beetle: "Now we must take leave of each other, for I shall enter upon the duties of my new office. You are now in Europe and can set out on the search for your betrothed bride. I wish you much success in it. And if you need advice or anything else, come to this garden, and ask for the Brazilian ambassador in the parrot-house."

The golden beetle left his countryman and continued his search alone. At first he liked the foreign country very well. He had left his Brazilian forest in the winter, and supposed it was now winter in Europe. So he was surprised to find himself in the midst of summer, for he did not know that it is summer in Europe when it is winter in Brazil, and *vice versa*. He wandered about on the soft turf in the garden for a while, until he met a running beetle.

"Holloa, comrade," he called to him; "are there any golden beetles around here?"

The running beetle was in a hurry as usual. Without stopping in his career, he called over his shoulder: "Look for the rose-bushes. But nothing will be given there to-day," for he thought the gray-coated stranger was a tramp seeking alms from the rich.

The golden beetle followed the directions, and after

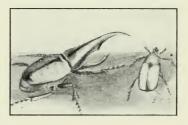
some little search, found the rose-bushes. He was going to make his way through the branches, still covered with thick leaves, when a stag beetle met him and with his horns raised threateningly, shouted roughly: "Halt! Where do you want to go?"

"I want to pay my respects to the golden beetles and make their acquaintance."

"Oho!" replied the stag beetle, insolently, "do you suppose that a shabby fellow like you can be introduced

to their lordships, the golden beetles, so unceremoniously? Move on."

"But I am a relative of the golden beetles, a near relative," said the golden beetle, much embarrassed.



"Of course," sneered the stag beetle; "rich gentlemen have a great many relatives. Off with you, and quickly, or I'll make you find your legs!"

As the golden beetle lingered, the stag beetle seized him roughly with his horns, to throw him out. The gray overcoat tore under the rude grasp, and an end of the shining gold cover of his wings appeared. The stag beetle let him go in astonishment, stared at him with his big black eyes, shook his feelers doubtfully, and said: "If you will kindly excuse me — I could not know — I will announce your lordship at once —" after which he hurried away.

The golden beetle perceived that he must make it easy for his kinsmen to recognize him, and stripped off his spider-web overcoat entirely. When several of the golden beetles, summoned by the stag beetle, appeared to welcome their cousin, they stood still, fairly dazzled. Never had they seen such magnificence. The European golden beetles were small, and had only a few modest gold spots, streaks, and rings on their backs and wings, while this South American cousin was probably four times as large, and his whole body, without a single break, was covered with glistening gold. In Europe they were considered immensely rich, but, in comparison with this American millionnaire, they seemed to themselves poor. He aroused their secret envy, but they did not allow it to be seen, received him very cordially, begged him to come in, set rose dew before him, and inquired about his affairs.

He told them that he had come from the Brazilian forest to Europe to find his future wife, who had been stolen from him by a wicked European. Perceiving very clearly that the European relatives, in comparison with him, were very plain people, he did not want to mortify them by a description of his palm palaces, his aristocratic acquaintances, his humming-birds, orchids, parrots, and Hercules beetles; but his bride he described in all the magnificence of her breadth of wings and shining blue and green enamel, and asked the cousins if they had not seen her or heard something about her.

The golden beetles looked at one another. Although their eyes convinced them of their transatlantic cousin's wealth, they believed he was exaggerating the charms of his bride. "If the young lady is so remarkably beautiful and richly adorned, as you say, Cousin," replied the most distinguished of the group, "she would probably have been noticed here. But we have heard nothing of her. Yet, for greater certainty, we will ask the butterflies."

The whole party climbed to the top branches of the rose-bushes, around which some butterflies were always hovering, and called them. They were only common white butterflies, yellow ones and fox faces, who felt honored to have the golden beetles condescend to enter into conversation with them. They were fairly stupefied with astonishment and admiration when they saw the gold-clad Brazilian. The latter spoke to them kindly and sadly, asking if they had not seen a wonderfully beautiful large butterfly, which glittered with the most brilliant colors, and looked as if it was set with pearls and precious stones.

"Oh, yes, I know whom you mean," cried a pert common white butterfly, either to make itself important or from stupidity.

"What, dear young lady, you have seen the one whom I am seeking? Quick! Where is she, that I may rush to her?" urged the golden beetle.

"One moment, sir," replied the white butterfly. "I only want to announce you."

The butterfly hastily flew away and went straight to a neighboring blackberry hedge, where a peacock eye was sunning itself. He imagined that the golden beetle's description suited this butterfly, the most beautiful one he knew in the whole neighborhood.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle," cried the butterfly, as he approached the peacock eye, "an American prince has come, who has heard of your beauty, and wants to ask your hand."

"An American prince?" asked the peacock eye, surprised and flattered, beginning to flutter her richly adorned wings.

"Yes, Mademoiselle, a prince, entirely covered with glittering gold, and so large, so stately, so handsome a creature I have never seen in forest or field. May I bring him to you?"

"Yes, bring him to me, my dear friend," said the peacock eye, settling herself so that her colors appeared to the best advantage.

The white butterfly quickly returned to the rosebush, and while still at a distance called to the golden beetle that was waiting impatiently, "Come, sir, come, the young lady will be happy to receive you."

The message surprised the golden beetle, for he would have expected his bride to fly to him at once, when she was informed of his presence; but he followed the white butterfly fluttering before him. All the moths and a number of golden beetles joined them,

and the Brazilian approached the blackberry hedge with a numerous train, which the peacock eye saw flying toward her from quite a long distance. When the white butterfly stopped close in front of the

beautiful creature, the golden beetle, without noticing her, glancing impatiently in all directions, asked: "Where is she?

"She is sitting directly in front of you, sir; don't you see her?" replied the white butterfly in surprise, while the peacock eye made pretty little movements to attract.



the attention of the aristocratic, gold-mailed suitor.

The golden beetle now saw the peacock eye and cried in a disappointed tone, "What put this into your mind; the young lady certainly is not she."

"I thought you wished to be introduced to me," said the peacock eye, sharply.

"Pardon me, Mademoiselle," replied the golden beetle, "it is a mistake. I hoped to find here my betrothed bride, an Atlas butterfly from my home, the most glorious, the most exquisite creature that ever glittered in the sun."

"Of course I cannot be compared with your Atlas butterfly," remarked the peacock eye, snappishly.

"You certainly cannot," answered the golden beetle with thoughtless sincerity.

"Brazilian princes are really delightfully civil," retorted the peacock eye deeply offended, turned her back upon the golden beetle and his companions, and flew away.

The butterflies and golden beetles left the American alone. They disapproved of his lack of politeness. "Our most aristocratic moths are not good enough for him!" "What does the dandy think he is!" "He might at least have been more courteous!" they buzzed to one another, and nobody defended him, no one honored his fidelity to his lost bride.

But the peacock butterfly, whom he had offended, vowed vengeance upon him. Flying to the guard room of the bombardier beetles, at the foot of an ancient hollow oak, she told them that a foreign millionnaire was visiting the golden beetles in the rose-bush—a millionnaire who carried vast treasures with him. They must seize him, then they would all be rich.

The bombardier beetles were a disorderly company.

They were always lying in wait, ready for any evil deed. The whole gang set off at once, marched to the rose-bush and surrounded it. They saw the golden beetle, whose magnificent glitter betrayed him. He had settled on a branch and was sorrowfully thinking what he should do now. Suddenly a crashing noise began below him, and missiles whizzed around his head. Startled by the attack, he looked around and discovered the bombardier beetles, who were raging around the foot of the rose-bush, firing at him. He could not understand the assault, but realized that his life was at stake and flew away as fast as possible, to get out of range of the bandits.

But where should he go now? Back to the kind lory, to tell him of his troubles? He found his countryman engaged in a loud, shrill conversation with a whole group of aras, cockatoos, and other parrots, who were all swinging in their big metal rings, talking together with vehement screams. The lory was gossiping so fast, that he did not see the golden beetle. But the attendant in the zoölogical garden, who was just entering the parrot-house with food for the birds, noticed him, flung the sack he held in his hand on the ground, threw his heavy cap at the golden beetle, which struck and knocked him down and, with a shout of joy, seized him. The beetle, stunned by the blow and the fall, did not move in the hand of the attendant, who hurried with his prize to the superintendent of

the garden, and silently placed it on the table before

"A Brazilian golden beetle!" cried the superintendent in joyful astonishment. "It probably came with our new lory. 'We often have these pleasant surprises with our consignments from across the sea. We will put it with our Atlas butterfly."

When the golden beetle heard the words "Atlas butterfly," he instantly recovered his senses. He forgot his present situation, he did not think that he was a prisoner, perhaps in danger of his life; he only repeated with secret joy that he should see his Atlas butterfly again. He did not move a limb, a wing, or a feeler when the superintendent laid him in the hollow of his hand, and went with him to the Museum of Natural History, which was connected with the zoölogical garden. Entering the great hall, he went to a glass case and opened it. The golden beetle glanced in — Oh, rapture! Oh, bliss! There sat his Atlas butterfly with outspread wings, though she was strangely motionless. At this sight the golden beetle made a sudden effort, and, before the astonished superintendent could shut his hand over him, flew away like a flash of lightning. Instantly a wild chase began, the superintendent and the attendant in the zoölogical garden ran here and there, but dared not throw anything at the golden beetle, for fear that they might break the cases, or damage the animals outside. He easily escaped, in his

swift flight, the butterfly nets they waved frantically to and fro, so they could only look on, while the golden beetle, buzzing loudly, flew in wide circles around the ceiling of the lofty hall, far beyond the reach of their arms.

Meantime, the glass case that held the Atlas butterfly was left open. In order not to injure the beautiful creature, they had not fastened her with a pin, but glued her down lightly with a thin varnish. They thought that she was dead, but it was not so. And as, just before, the mere mention of the Atlas butterfly's name had roused the golden beetle from his stupor, now the well-known loud buzzing of the golden beetle waked the butterfly from her unconsciousness. She slowly recovered her senses, saw at first, as if in a confused dream, then more and more clearly, what was passing around her, heard the noise of the chase, suddenly recognized high up at the ceiling her beloved golden beetle, and with fresh courage began to make violent efforts to tear her legs from the varnish in which they were stuck. Unnoticed by the superintendent and his servant, whose eyes were fixed upon the escaped beetle, the butterfly pulled and strained and jerked until she succeeded in freeing herself. True, she left a leg in the varnish; but she had no thought now for pain and wounds. Up she flew, straight to the golden beetle, and before the wondering eyes of the two men, the faithful pair from Brazil were once more united.

With the speed of an arrow, both flew out of the open door into the garden and alighted on the top of a tall tree. The golden beetle could not contain his joy, as he stroked and petted the Atlas butterfly. But she said: "Alas, how I look! My wings have lost their brightness, and I was obliged to leave a leg with those wicked men. Now I am so ugly and you are so handsome."

"Your wound will heal and your wings will shine again, and you will be now as always more beautiful than any other creature in the world." At the same moment, he began with zeal and strength to brush the gold from his own wings, and to scatter it over his bride's. Soon she was completely covered with glistening gold, and again as magnificent to behold as a jewel, but the golden beetle was as plain and colorless as on the journey, when he hid his splendor under the spider-web overcoat.

A starling, whose nest was in the tree, had seen and heard everything. Perching beside the couple on the bough, he soothed them in regard to his intentions, and begged them to tell him their story. They did so, and the starling was so touched by it, that he flew around the garden, relating to all the birds and free animals the incidents of the cruel separation, and the wonderful reunion of the two faithful Brazilians. Birds, squirrels, butterflies, and beetles came flying from all directions,



"The starling begged them to tell him their story."



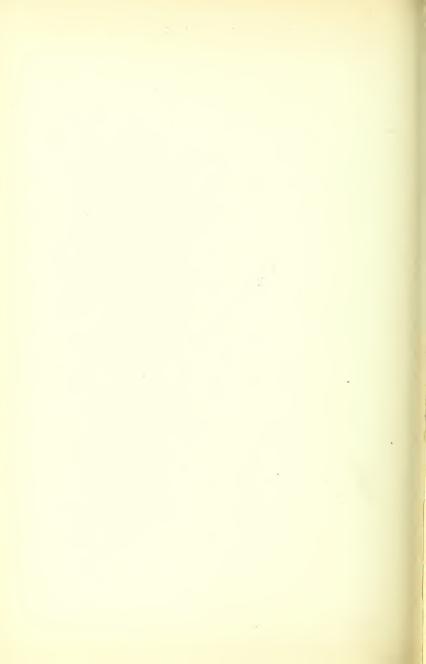
brought the foreigners the best honey that could be had from the modest autumn flowers of Europe, and advised them to have their wedding.

But they did not want to marry until they had returned home. It was too cold for them here, and they were homesick for the forest and the humming-birds, and orchids, and parrots, and monkeys. Their new friends put their heads together and discussed what they could do for the beautiful creatures. The starling undertook to carry them to the nearest seaport, and put them on a ship sailing for South America. True, the young couple would be obliged to hide in the dark hold, and be annoyed by the intrusive, vulgar cockroaches; but after what they had experienced, this was a small annoyance, easily endured, which they would bear with firmness till they reached the end of their journey.

The golden beetle, meanwhile, had covered himself with new gold, and the Atlas butterfly had regained her former magnificent colors, only even more beautiful from the gold scattered over them, so when they again appeared in the forest they were more glorious than ever. Every one welcomed them with the greatest joy; they remained from that time united, without ever separating, and in the hours of gossip with the lories over the honey, the company never grew tired of hearing repeated again and again the story of their sorrowful journey to Europe and happy return,







## THE GOLD BRAIDS

"Он, mother," cried the little girl, "I am so hungry!"
"Be quiet, my darling, pray be quiet," said the

mother, trying to soothe her.

"But, mother," the child began again, after a short pause, "why don't we have something to eat?"

"Because there is no food," was the answer. Then the little girl began to sob bitterly, and her mother took her in her arms, and wept, too, rocking and kissing the little one.

The mother was a beautiful young woman, whose husband had died a short time before, leaving her alone in the world with her child. She had no money, so she was obliged to work to earn a living for herself and her little daughter. She was a good seamstress and very industrious; but she could not always find work, and then they had a hard time. For the baker and the butcher are not rich people; they can neither give nor lend long, and if customers cannot pay them, they can get neither coffee nor sugar, neither meat nor bread, neither potatoes nor lard, neither coal for stoves and hearths nor oil for lamps.

Now another time without work had come, the last money the widow could save had been spent, and for two days no fire had burned in the stove, though it was winter and very cold; and no oil in the lamp, though it grew dark early. The little girl had eaten nothing all day, and her mother had tasted no food for two days.

"I can't wait any longer," said the child, in a faint voice. "If I don't have a piece of bread, I shall die."

"No," cried the mother, "you shall not die. Come, I'll put you to bed, so that you may keep warm, and then I'll go and get you some bread."

"Yes, do, dear mother," whispered the little girl, while the mother was undressing and putting her to bed. "Only soon, please."

The mother went to the neighbor who lived in the second story. She was a very rich woman, but hard-hearted and miserly. Besides, she envied the young widow because, in spite of her poverty, she was far handsomer and more elegant.

The rich woman listened impatiently, and answered sullenly: "I lend nothing. If people were always giving, they would have nothing left for themselves. And I have no work for you, either. Go, in heaven's name."

"Then must I leave my child to starve?" cried the mother, wringing her hands.

"Why don't you pawn or sell something?" asked the woman harshly.

"I have nothing more to pawn or sell," was the answer.

"Indeed," replied the neighbor, with a spiteful smile. "At least, you have your long, fair braids. What does a poor beggar want with such a quantity of hair? You can certainly get quite a little sum for it."

The poor mother looked silently at her cruel neighbor a moment, then she left the room without a word.

She really did have wonderfully beautiful hair, long, thick, soft as silk, yellow as spun gold. When she let it down, it covered her like a royal mantle; when she brushed it, sunbeams seemed to be playing around the comb and her hand.

When the envious neighbor had told her to cut off her hair, her one ornament, it cut her to the heart. But when she stood in the street, and thought of her starving child up in a cold, dark, little garret room, she quickly resolved to make the hard sacrifice.

At the street corner was a hairdresser's shop, in whose show windows were the wax busts of ladies with hair beautifully and elaborately arranged, wigs of various colors, and oddly shaped bottles of perfume. On the panes was pasted a notice bearing the words, "Women's blond and white hair bought here at the highest prices."

To this shop the young mother went. At the door she hesitated, but not long. Summoning all her courage, she entered.

"What do you wish?" asked the hairdresser, a little hunchbacked man with sharp, black eyes.

"Excuse me, sir," replied the poor mother, timidly, "but I think you buy women's blond hair?"

"Yes, certainly. Have you any to sell?"

"Mine, sir, if you want it."

"Yes, yes—h'm, h'm," said the little hunchback, fixing his sharp eyes on her. "Let me see it."

He took her into the back shop, and she quickly drew out her comb and let the heavy braids fall. They hung to her feet.

The hairdresser uttered a cry of surprise. "What! Do you want to have these braids cut off?"

She only nodded; her throat felt choked, so that she could not make a sound, and she turned her head away to keep the little man from seeing the tears which filled her eyes.

"Do you know that they will never grow so beautiful again?"

She only shrugged her shoulders.

"But why do you commit this sin against yourself?"

"Because I must," she answered, and began to sob violently. "I have a little child who is starving and freezing. I have neither money nor work, and no one will help me. There is nothing else left."

"Yes, yes—h'm, h'm," he said again, fixing his keen eyes on her, as if he was trying to read her thoughts. He seemed to reflect a short time; then he suddenly said, harshly: "If you have decided to do it, I am satisfied. Sit down. How much do you ask?"





" 'Shut your eyes,' said the hunchback, authoritatively."

"I don't know the value of it. I depend upon you."

"Well, we'll see." He rummaged a short time among the scissors and razors that lay on the marble-topped table; but, instead of taking any of them, pulled out a drawer and seized something which the young widow could not see very distinctly, though it looked like a long leather case. "Shut your eyes," said the hunchback, authoritatively. She obeyed. But even through the closed lids she saw a sudden light—like a flash of lightning a flame appeared to glide over her head. She screamed and fainted. When she recovered, the little man was sprinkling her with cologne, muttering: "What nonsense! Do be sensible."

She raised both hands to her head. It was perfectly bare. Her two braids were lying on the marble table. Light seemed to flicker from them. The hairdresser placed them in a scale and put silver coins into the other until the two balanced exactly. He used twenty-eight thalers, for the hair weighed more than a pound.

"Live and let live," he said when he had finished.
"These braids really ought to be outweighed with gold, instead of silver, but I must earn something, too."

He counted the money into her hand, then took back one coin, saying with a queer smile, "I am deducting this piece — you will learn for what."

When the mother went out into the street again, her head was as confused as if she had just waked from a dream. But she felt the heavy silver in her pocket, and knew it was not that.

Now she was rich, and at least could do something for her child. Running into the nearest shops, she bought not only bread and coal, coffee and sugar, but also cakes, butter, and an egg. She was in such a hurry that she did not notice how people stared at her shaved head. Then, laden with her packages, and followed by a man carrying coal, she rushed up the stairs to her room. Her rich neighbor stood at the threshold of her door, watching her spitefully. She saw at once that the young widow had lost her magnificent hair, and cried, with a malicious smile: "You have taken my advice. That was right. In future you will lose no time in combing it."

The mother did not stop to answer. But when she reached her door at the top of the stairs, she put her packages on the floor and tied her shawl around her head, that the little girl might not notice anything.

The child had not gone to sleep. Hunger had kept her awake. Her first words, when her mother came in, were, "Mother, have you brought the bread?"

"Yes, my darling," cried the mother, and in an instant she was beside the bed, covering the child with kisses, "and cakes, and butter, and many other good things. There." She gave her a slice of bread, which the little girl bit eagerly; then she made a fire in the stove, lighted the lamp, boiled the coffee, and cooked the egg, and it was bright and warm and cosey in the little attic room, and the child was happy and laughed and talked. So the mother no longer grieved because she had sacrificed her beautiful hair. When they had eaten until they were fully satisfied, the little girl fell asleep at once, and the mother lay down by her side. The next morn-

ing she was roused by her child's clear voice, exclaiming in surprise, "Mother, why didn't you braid your hair last night?" She started — yes,

her hair, long, thick, and soft as silk, was spread over the pillows and falling on the coverlet. She sprang out of bed, but she did not need to go to the little dim mirror on

the wall to perceive that she really did

have her hair again; for when she stood on the floor, it fell around her in the usual way, veiling her from head to foot like a royal mantle of spun gold. She swiftly braided it, dressed hurriedly, and ran to the hairdresser.

"Mr. Barber, what does this mean? Are you a juggler? Or a magician?"

"Don't be troubled," said the little hunchbacked

man, and his keen gaze seemed to pierce her through and through. "There is no witchcraft here. I make a preparation for the hair, which has not its equal anywhere. The hair grows out in one night, only thicker and more beautiful than before. I washed your head with it when you fainted, and that is why I deducted the money. Do you understand?"

"How shall I thank you?" said the mother, softly, trying to take his hand to kiss it.

"What are you thinking of!" cried the hairdresser, harshly, drawing back a step. "Go away. I have no time."

But when she had reached the door, he called her back. "One thing more, my good woman. If you should be badly off again, you need not sell your braids. Just cut a piece a finger wide from the end — not a bit more, do you hear? — and carry it to the nearest goldsmith. He'll buy it of you, for it is spun gold. It will grow again, too. But you must do all this only if you really need it, and can obtain help in no other way. Mark this. And now, farewell."

As she went home, lost in thought, she met in the entry her greedy neighbor who was just getting into her carriage to take a drive, as she did every day. The envious woman stood as if she were rooted to the ground, opened her eyes in amazement, and cried: "Why, my good woman, what ails you? Didn't you have your braids cut off last evening?"

"Yes, they were," replied the young widow, "but they grew again in the night."

"You are making fun of me," snarled the hard-hearted rich woman. "How could that be possible?"

"The barber washed my shaven head with a wonderfully strong tonic, and it made the hair grow out so quickly again, only still thicker and longer than before."

The angry miser did not say a word, but cast a spiteful glance at her neighbor, who was again so much more beautiful than she, left her standing in the entry, and ran straight to the hunchbacked hairdresser.

"Will you buy my hair?" she asked, after entering the shop without any greeting.

The little hunchback looked at her angrily with his sharp, black eyes, and answered: "Your hair isn't worth anything. I can give you nothing for it."

She controlled her rage, and said: "No matter. I will give it to you. Only cut it off."

"But why?" he asked.

"Because I want it to grow out much longer and thicker, like my neighbor, the seamstress's. It isn't right that such a needy wretch should be more beautiful than a wealthy, aristocratic lady like me."

"Oho?" growled the little hunchback. "Well, as you please."

He told her to sit down in a chair, but did not take the mysterious case out of the drawer. Instead, he seized a pair of scissors which lay on the marble top of the table, and grasped her little thin braid, whose color was a dull, brownish black. Snip, snap, and he held the rat tail in his hand and flung it contemptuously into the corner. Snip, snap, and her skull was shaved so smooth that no one who looked at her could help laughing.

"I've finished," he said roughly. "You can go."

"But the hair tonic?"

"What hair tonic?"

"The one which makes the hair grow out again so quickly, only more beautiful than before."

"It costs eighty-one marks," he said.

"No matter," she answered haughtily. "I have it."

He took the money, then opened a bottle, and sprinkled over her head a few drops of liquid, which smelled like pitch and sulphur. It itched and burned horribly, but she stifled the pain. "One can suffer a little for the sake of being beautiful," she thought, and went off very well pleased, while the hairdresser, smiling scornfully, shut the shop door behind her.

When she reached home, and her husband and servants saw her, they clasped their hands in horror. "Just wait," she said, and going to her chamber, she lay down in bed like a sick person. She remained there patiently all day long, and fell asleep late in the evening, firmly believing that her discomfort would be over the next morning. She woke very early, for her impatience would not allow her to sleep longer. The first

thing she did was to seize her head with both hands—alas! it was as bare as when it left the hands of the hunchbacked hairdresser.

"Perhaps it doesn't grow so fast," she thought, and stayed in bed twenty-four hours longer. But the next day she was just as bald as before. Then, in a rage, she hurried on her clothes, wrapped her head in a veil and hat, and rushed off to the hunchbacked hairdresser.

"Man, you have cheated me!" she screamed.

"That is not so. How?" he answered roughly.

"Your tonic is a swindle. The hair does not grow out again."

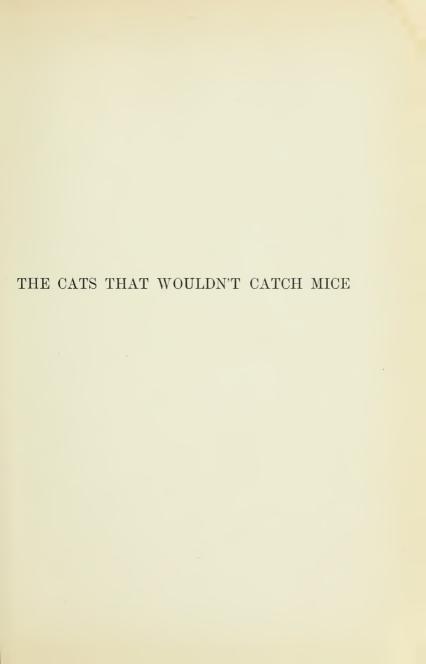
"Have you children? Or at least one child?"

"No."

"Well, my tonic helps only mothers. You ought to have known that. Leave my shop."

It was of no use. If she did not wish to remain as ugly and ridiculous as a scarecrow, she was obliged to buy a wig, and as her hair never grew out again, she had to wear this wig to the end of her life. But the young mother fared better and better. She had plenty of work, so she was soon able to leave her attic room and move to the second story. She never needed to cut off an end of her gold braids. She brought up her little daughter, and when the daughter was a beautiful, educated, charming girl twenty years old, she married a fine young man; they had a large family of children, and if they are not dead, they are living still.







## THE CATS THAT WOULDN'T CATCH MICE

In an old library there once lived a cat, kept to protect the books and their leather bindings from the teeth of the mice. She was descended from a long line of ancestors, who had all held the same office, and she was the mother of five charming kittens: a black one named Miese, a white one named Lise, a black and white one called Purr, one spotted with brown and yellow named Murr, and one striped with black and gray, called Hinz. Purr, Murr, and Hinz were tom-cats, the other two were pussies. The brothers and sisters were old enough to study, and had an hour's lesson from their mother every day. They could already purr, spit, and mew, make velvet paws, clean their fur, and wash their faces with their wet paws. Now their mother began to introduce them to the higher knowledge, that is, she taught them to catch mice. This was not at all easy. Behind and under the book shelves were a number of holes, which the mice used for hidingplaces and refuges, where no grown cat and not even a kitten could possibly reach them. The chase could only be successful in the clear open space in the centre of the library. So it was necessary to watch patiently until

a mouse ventured out, and then catch it at one spring, before it had time to slip back into its hole. The kittens were obliged to decide quickly and to act at once. If they hesitated even a second, their prey escaped.

One morning the lesson was in full course. and children had chased a mouse, but it had darted past fat Purr and slipped under a book shelf before the clumsy fellow could stop it. For this awkwardness his mother cuffed his ears several times, and his sisters Miese and Lise laughed at him for being such a blockhead. After some time a mouse, the same one or another, put its sharp nose out from under a book shelf, and looked around it. The mother and teacher instantly saw it with her keen eyes, and motioned to her children to keep quiet. As everything remained still, the mouse, from imprudence or bravado, came out entirely. Like a flash of lightning the old cat was between the mouse and the book shelf, cutting off its retreat. A wild running and leaping began. The mouse, which could do nothing else, ran up the books, the kittens followed, and so eagerly that they upset a pile of books which had been carelessly arranged. It fell to the floor with a great clatter, and behind it appeared a mouse's nest, where ten half-grown mice were tumbling over one another, vainly trying to escape by flight. The mother stunned them by swift blows with her paws, and gave them, struggling, to her kittens, that they might play with them before killing them with teeth and claws.



"The kittens followed, and so eagerly that they upset a pile of books."



Hearing the squeaking of the little mice in their pain and terror, their mother came out from the rows of books still standing on the shelves. She could only scream with fright, but could not help her little ones. Yet, when she was obliged to watch the massacre, the horrible spectacle was more than she could bear. Rushing as if crazed to the nearest little mouse, which Purr was cuffing right and left with his clumsy paws, she ran straight into the old cat's claws. There was a joyful mew, a blow of the paw, and the mouse mother lay dead beside her ten dead children.

The cat put them all in a row, called the librarian, to show him her prey, and then dismissed her children to take a long nap.

The kittens did not follow their mother's example. Instead of going to rest, they gathered in a corner of the library, where Miese began: "Those poor mice! They are really very pretty little creatures!"

"Nonsense!" growled Purr. "How can people think mice pretty!"

"You are a cannibal!" hissed Miese, angrily. "Didn't you feel sorry for the mother who came so bravely to help her little ones?"

Purr was silent in confusion, and Murr muttered: "That's true. The mother was a little heroine. I'm sorry for her."

"I must say," remarked Hinz, "that I am not at all proud of what we have done. It's really a cowardly

thing for us, who are so big and strong and active, besides being so terribly armed with teeth and claws, to attack the weak, defenceless creatures."

"We ought to be ashamed of ourselves," said Lise.

"We all saw it," said Miese. "The spectacle will haunt me a long time. There before us was the peaceful nest. The ten brothers and sisters were lying comfortably together enjoying their young lives. Their mother's love watched over them. Suddenly destruction came. We killed and slaughtered. Now the mother and children are gone; the nest is torn to pieces. Why do we commit such cruelties? By what right? For what purpose?"

"Bravo! You speak from the soul!" cried the vivacious Hinz. He admired his sister very much. She was the brightest, most eloquent, and best educated of them all. She had not been born and brought up in a library for nothing; she did not boast in vain of an endless line of learned ancestors. She stood high above the ordinary roof and cellar cats, and promised to be an ornament to the cat family.

"I could cry when I think of those little mice," said Lise.

"I won't do it again," Hinz declared resolutely.

"But if mother orders us," objected Purr.

"We are no longer children," replied Miese, vehemently; "we ought to and must act according to our own views. We will tell mother so frankly."

In fact, when the old cat called her children in the afternoon to take their lesson, Miese stood boldly before her and said, "Mother, we have determined not to catch any more mice."

The cat could hardly believe her ears. Putting them back angrily, she answered: "You have determined? Why, that sounds very fine! True, it is more comfortable to be lazy. Now begin, or you'll have your ears cuffed."

Miese did not allow herself to be frightened. "It isn't for the sake of laziness. Only we will not again commit the crime of murdering an innocent family of little mice."

"Mur-der-ing!" repeated the old cat, fairly stammering in her amazement. "Have you gone crazy?"

"I think I have never been more sensible than I am now," said Miese, quietly but firmly. "We have agreed to keep peace with the mice in the future. Their lives and property shall be sacred to us."

The cat could not yet understand. "Are you my children or changelings? No true cat ever talked so before. We are here to catch mice, and that you will do too, or I'll punish you."

"I deny that we are here for that," replied Miese, boldly. "We are here to love one another. The mice, too, are our brothers, like everything that lives and enjoys life."

"What! The mice must be my brothers? Stop

all this." The cat was not patient. She made a spring at Miese, to punish her, but the kitten escaped the threatening paw, ran into the corner, and cried defiantly: "Long live justice! Long live brotherhood!"

The mother tried persuasion and entreaties. "Children, this foolish jest has lasted long enough. Let us lose no more time. To work. I will train you to be capable cats. You must become good mousers, like your mother and all your ancestors back to time immemorial."

"What do we care what our ancestors have done!" replied Miese, obstinately. "We will break with the humdrum old ways. We are progressive cats."

The brothers purred approvingly.

The old cat cast furious glances at them. "Progressive cats! The word seems to please you, simpletons. No doubt you think yourselves far more clever than your narrow-minded old mother. Have you asked yourselves how you are to live, if you don't catch mice?"

"We don't eat the mice," retorted Hinz, pertly.

"No, because we have other food. But why are we fed? Because we catch mice. If we no longer caught mice, people would no longer feed us, or even let us stay in our library. Then we should see how we could manage."

"There is food for everybody in the wide world," said Lise.

"That's enough!" screamed the cat, furiously. "Begin — or woe be unto you!"

The five kittens did not stir. Their mother sprang upon them, but they all ran through the open door, and kept on till the old cat stopped chasing them.

They rested in a meadow near a farm-house.

"We will begin a new life, a more beautiful, more just, and better one," said Miese, when she had recovered her breath a little

"Very well," said Purr; "but meanwhile I am hungry, and would like to have my supper."

"You never think of anything but eating," replied Lise, reproachfully.

Murr came to his brother's support. "I will gladly live for fraternity and justice. I will gladly be a progressive cat; but the stomach wants its rights, too."

"You are right," said Miese. "Only have a little patience. You'll see that your virtue will not fail to have its reward. I have confidence in our good cause. Follow me."

She had seen a barn in the meadow, and quickly led her brothers and sisters to it. They entered without any trouble through an open window. Inside was a perfect mountain of wheat, over which countless mice were swarming. At the sudden entrance of the five cats, they scattered, squeaking with fright, and vanished under, behind, and within the mountain of wheat, in mouse holes, and between the beams of the roof.

Purr looked after them with sparkling eyes, Murr made a movement to follow, but Hinz stopped him with a sharp "Mew." Miese climbed slowly up the wheat mountain, and when she had reached the top, solemnly began: "Honored mice! Dear fellow-creatures! You have fled from us. We can understand this, after the experiences you have had with our race. But we come without any hostile designs upon you. We are no mouse hunters. We are progressive cats. We lament all the evil which our relatives have done you, and would like to atone for their wickedness during thousands of years. Dear mice, let us be brothers. We offer you the paw of friendship. Clasp it. Join hands. A bond of love shall unite us in the future, and we will work together until there is light in the world, till the innocent blood no longer flows, till cats and mice beautify each other's short lives according to their powers."

During Miese's speech many mice had put their sharp noses out of their hiding places and listened with increasing astonishment. When she had finished, all was still for a time. At last an old mouse spoke. "I have lived a long while and had many experiences." she said; "but I have never heard such words from the mouth of a cat. If we could only believe you."

"Your distrust is unfair," replied Miese. "Why should we pretend to feelings we do not possess?"

"Why?" answered the old mouse. "To lull us into

security, so that you can eat us comfortably when we are so stupid as to obey your call."

"Dear brothers," said Miese, "you are doing us grave injustice. Our hearts are full of love for you, and we only wish there might be an opportunity to show it in other ways than by mere words." There



was so much warmth in her voice, that it made an impression upon the mouse.

"Do you speak in the name of the whole cat people?" asked the old mouse.

"For the present we can speak only in our own name," replied Miese. "There is still much prejudice among us. Our old people will not give up their wicked cus-

toms. But the young ones are with us. I am sure of that. The future will be ours. We will set an example, which all our race will soon follow enthusiastically. Come, brothers, come, dear mice! Let us embrace one another. Let us celebrate the festival of peace and fraternity."

The mice began to whisper and mutter. Some wanted to accept Miese's invitation, others hesitated. Suddenly a young mouse squeaked: "I'll risk it! Fraternity is so grand a thought that I will gladly stake my life to learn whether the progressive cat means honestly." And, in spite of the anxious squeaking of the timid ones, it came boldly out of its hole. Miese went very gently up, that she might not startle it by hasty movements, stroked its back with a velvet paw, licked its nose with her rough tongue, and said, "Come to my heart, brother, this is the happiest day of my life."

The mouse was terribly frightened, but did not show it, and bravely endured the caresses of the cat, even timidly returned them. At this sight the mice burst into cheers, and a large number of them boldly approached the cats. A few minutes later old and young mice were crowding eagerly around the cats, exchanging embraces and kisses with them, racing merrily through the barn, and calling to the more timid ones, who were cautiously watching this new spectacle from their holes: "Out with you all, cowards! The cats are our best

friends! You will offend them by your reserve! Long live the cats! Hurrah for fraternity!"

This went on for some time, then a young mouse began: "Dear brothers and sisters! Love for love! Faith for faith! Since the cats have seen their injustice, we will forgive them without reserve. We will bear them no grudge and, in future, we will be one heart and one soul. Let us appoint them honorary mice. Let the difference in parentage be forgotten. Let us never reproach them for their origin. We will always treat our honorary mice like brothers, and admit them to the full rights of citizenship among us."

Purr and Murr looked at each other in bewilderment, but Miese cried enthusiastically, "We will always try to show ourselves worthy of the name of honorary mice." An old mouse protested against undue haste, and asked that the honorary mice should have their claws gnawed off, before they were admitted to citizenship in the mouse nation; but the young mice cried down the old fogy slow coach, reproached him for his distrust, told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, the mouse nation must not be outdone in generosity by the cats, and the motion to bestow the rights of citizenship upon the cats was passed by a very large majority.

"And now," cried several young mice, "we will celebrate this historic hour by a great festival. Come, dear honorary mice, we will share what we have fraternally with you."

This invitation greatly pleased the cats, especially Purr, whose stomach was complaining, for it was long after his usual hour for eating. He looked eagerly around, switched his tail to and fro, and asked earnestly, "Where is there anything to nibble?"

The mice squeaked merrily, and one answered: "Don't you see it? You certainly have plenty of everything before you."

Purr sniffed and peered around in all directions, then he answered angrily, "I smell nothing, and I see nothing."

"Is it possible?" replied the mouse. "You are standing in front of a whole mountain of the finest wheat; you see how our whole people are feasting, and you find nothing to satisfy your hunger?"

Purr looked provoked and began to spit. "I suppose you take me for a fool," he growled.

Miese interposed. "Dear fellow-citizens," she said to the mouse, "we can do nothing with your wheat. It is no food for us."

"See the despisers of our fare!" cried a saucy mouse. "You don't know what is good," exclaimed another. "What would you like? Probably a young mouse?" shouted a third, snappishly. But other mice reproved them for these unfriendly speeches, and turning to the cats, said: "Forgive this rudeness, and don't be offended by it. All sensible mice condemn them. We do not yet know your taste. What do you eat, if you cannot take wheat?"

"Could we perhaps have some beef liver?" asked Miese.

The mice looked at each other, and answered: "Beef liver? What's that? We don't know it."

"Or a little milk?" said Lise.

"Mice do not drink. There is no milk here," was the reply. "Would you perhaps like nuts? They are the most delicious food there is; we haven't many of them, but we will give them to you gladly."

"Nuts? No," answered Hinz; "people play with nuts, but they don't eat them."

The mice smiled, and one of them said, "Perhaps, if you prefer bacon—"

"Bacon! Capital! Bring it out!" cried all five of the kittens at once, joyously holding their tails straight up in the air.

The mice eagerly collected a few scraps of bacon, on which the cats sprang with such haste that the mice were startled, and ran into their holes. In an instant it was devoured, and Purr cried, "More!"

The mice, who had looked on in horror, answered: "Is it possible! That was our whole supply for the winter. And you have eaten it at one meal!"

"Hold your tongues, you louts!" cried Murr in a rage. Miese soothed him and, turning to the mice, said:

"No offence. We are somewhat hungry after our long walk. And, to tell the truth, we are still. If you could perhaps tell us where this nice bacon is —"

For a long time there was no reply. The mice put their heads together and whispered. At last an old one said, "In the farm-house over yonder is a garret filled with flitches of bacon."

"Quick! Let us run over there!" cried Purr.

"Gently," replied the old mouse, "that won't do. You can't get in, for the door is locked. We have dug a passage into the room, but it is too narrow for you."

"Then do us the favor to go over yourselves and bring us some bacon," said Miese.

"We'll take precious good care not to do that," cried several mice at once. "There are two abominable cats in the garret, and we can only venture in when these two bloodthirsty murderers have gone out."

The cats made wry faces when they heard their relatives spoken of in this way. A mouse noticed it, and said quickly: "You see, we are doing you the honor of considering you entirely as mice. A harsh word against cats cannot offend you, for you certainly have nothing more in common with those miserable bandits."

"That is true," said Miese. "But I thought that, for our sakes, you would think somewhat more kindly of the cats and admit that they are not *all* miserable bandits."

"Surely you would not wish to defend the horrible cat tribe—you, whom we have just made honorary mice?" screamed several mice, excitedly.

Miese saw that the conversation threatened to take

a bad turn, and remained silent. Meanwhile the mice had finished their banquet and, going back to their holes well satisfied, bade the cats good night. They were left alone in the barn and, looking at each other in perplexity, made all sorts of unpleasant reflections.

Hinz was the first to break the silence, "Well, dear honorary mouse," he asked Miese, "how do you like our new countrymen?"

"Pretty fellows," replied Lise in the same subdued tones; "I would like to eat them."

Purr laughed grimly, "So would I." And Murr added, "Miese, you are the most clever one of us all; but to-day, I'm afraid, you have done a very foolish thing."

"Let me alone," Miese spit angrily. "Of course, the old humdrum way is easier than the bold, progressive one. We are treading entirely new paths. We have undertaken a great educational work. So we must have patience, and bear some discomfort without grumbling. The poor mice are not lacking in goodwill. If some of them still doubt the purity of our intentions, we must not wonder at it. This will soon pass away."

"But just now my stomach is hollow," growled Purr.

"We will learn to eat wheat," said Miese, and resolutely taking some grains in her mouth began to chew them. But, in spite of the most desperate efforts, she

could not swallow them, and secretly spit them out. Meanwhile there was no quiet in the holes of the mice. In every passage and room they put their heads together, talking in low but eager tones about the great event. Some said, "This will come to no good end," others, "Cats will be cats, even if we appoint them honorary mice," and others added, "Perhaps they are spies."

A young mouse defended the new friends and said, "The leader of the progressive cats is really a noble creature," but was interrupted by cries from all sides, "If she isn't a swindler, if she isn't sneaking in among us with evil designs, she is surely crazy."

Several voices added: "Her brothers have regular murderers' faces. They are tramps, who want us to feed them. All our bacon is gone already; if we could only get rid of them pleasantly."

But the mice finally fell asleep; for they were tired and in a safe place. The five hungry cats on their hard beds found the night very long. All thought of their mother's warm fur and their ample meals, and Miese asked herself if the whole mouse nation was worth so much privation and hardship.

When day dawned, the rested mice came out of their holes and began to attend to their business, without troubling themselves about the five sulky kittens. Some were peeling grains of wheat for breakfast, others were cleaning themselves, others still were playing.

Lise watched the bustle awhile, then she asked impatiently: "What does this mean? Are we to have no breakfast?"

A mouse answered rudely: "I suppose we ought to feed you with pap, poor little things?" The others laughed.

"Pardon me," said Miese, gently. "We belong to you. You cannot let us starve to death."

"You bore us!" screamed a mouse. "If you won't

eat wheat, steal some meat from the farmer, or catch birds on the trees and roofs."

"You are not in earnest," replied Miese. "To kill birds would be a crime. Surely we want to have fraternity, love, and virtue reign in the world."



All the mice laughed. "To kill mice is murder; but to catch birds is earning one's living honestly."

"Bravo!" shouted Hinz, in a terrible voice, sprang with a single bound upon the mouse which had made this remark, killed it with one bite, and devoured it in an instant, before Miese could prevent him. The mice scattered in terror, pursued by Purr and Murr, who each seized a victim before they could escape into their holes. Scarcely were they safe when they all began to shriek: "Traitors! Murderers! Bandits! Robbers!

May you all break your necks! May you be drowned! Vagabond rabble! Pestilent pack!"

This was too much for Miese, and she dashed furiously toward the holes, but could not catch a single mouse. "Let us go," she said, turning to her brothers and sister; "nothing sensible can be done with these uneducated creatures."

They set out on the way to their library, and, after a long walk, reached home weary, ashamed, starved, and downcast. The old cat received them on the threshold with the exclamation: "Why, here come the runaways! Have you converted the world to your reforms already?"

"Mother, give us something to eat; we are almost starved," said Miese, humbly. "The world is not yet ripe for our grand thoughts. And the mice, especially, are an infamous set of wretches, who must be exterminated. We will catch them again to your heart's content."

THE ELF CHILD



## THE ELF CHILD

ONCE upon a time there was a large clearing in the midst of a thick beechwood, and in the middle of this clearing was a big, deep pond, on whose shores grew rushes, and on whose surface floated water-lilies. In this pond lived many elves, who slept all through the day on a bed of fine sand and soft plants, but in the evening came up to breathe the air of the upper world. Then they sat down on the grass in the glade, parted and braided their golden hair, wrapped themselves in rainbow-colored veils, adorned themselves with pearls and precious stones from little mother-of-pearl caskets, ate fruit and honey, drank dew and sweet flower juices, and played forfeits and blindman's-buff. During the weeks when the nightingale sang and also at other times, when there was a full moon, they formed into a large ring and danced until the cock crowed. The gnomes, too, often came from the neighboring mountains, and if they were very well behaved, and the elves were in a good humor, they were allowed to dance and play with them until the gray dawn drove them home, too. In the meadow where the elves held their summer festivals, the grass grew more luxuriantly and more beautiful,

flowers bloomed in the places where their silver-white feet had floated in dancing. The inhabitants of the wood knew that the glade was used by the elves of the pond for a playground, and timidly avoided it; for they were aware that the beautiful water women, though they did not usually trouble themselves about mortals, and did them no harm, grew very angry if they were impertinently watched, or even surprised by accident at their games.

Now it happened that there lived in the village at the edge of the wood a young fellow, who thought of nothing but mischievous tricks and practical jokes. When he was a little boy he used to let loose in the schoolroom and church, beetles, to whose legs he had tied bits of paper with pieces of thread. When he grew larger, he sawed the back legs of the schoolmaster's chair three-quarters through, so that it broke down when the teacher sat in it. When he was a half-grown lad, he tied dogs and cats together by their tails, and laughed maliciously when the poor animals fought furiously with one another. Of course such a fellow always robbed birds' nests, and stole fruit from the trees. This rascal had often heard of the elves of the pond in the forest meadow, their dances in the moonlight summer nights, and their sports with the gnomes, and he could not rest until he had seen the merry pastime with his own eyes. One warm June evening, when the moon was full, he stole through the forest and across the glade to

a spot on the shore of the pond, where the rushes grew thick, and, hidden among them, waited with some little anxiety for what would happen.

During the first hours after sunset he heard nothing except the croaking of the frogs near by, and the bell-like tones of the more distant bullfrogs, and saw in the twilight owls and bats flying noiselessly hither and thither. Just after midnight the moon rose, the pond and the woodland meadow were lighted almost as brilliantly as day, and suddenly the impudent scoundrel cowering among the rushes started, almost frightened to death. Close beside his hiding place a silvery laugh rang out and, at the same moment, a young elf rose from the water and clapped her hands loudly. Instantly dozens of other elves appeared in the pond, surrounded the first one, shouted joyously, splashed the water till it foamed, dashed drops and streams into one another's faces, and at last swam swiftly, in a long line, to the shore. There they had apparently concealed clothes and jewels in the bushes, or in holes in the ground, for in a short time they glided out of the reeds, clad in shimmering, floating veils, and glittering with gems, and frolicked about on the meadow.

The first elves were young girls. After them came young mothers with little elf children, many of whom could already walk alone; others fell down when they tried to stand on their small fat legs, and not a few were still on pillows. The mothers who had children at the breast

nursed them, rocked them in their arms till they fell asleep, laid them in the tall grass on the shore, and hurried back to their companions to join their games



and ring dancing. One baby in long clothes was laid by its mother among the rushes so near the spy that he could almost touch it with his outstretched hand. It was as beautiful as the angels in the pictures of Paradise, more beautiful than any mortal child he had

ever seen. But he did not look at it long, for the scene in the meadow attracted his attention far more strongly. Some were playing blindman's-buff, others tag, others still were dancing or striking shuttlecocks, then they all joined in songs with choruses, which sounded so sweet that even the hardened rascal in the reeds felt his eyes fill with tears, and finally they sat down in the grass and amid jests and laughter began to feast. At this part of the nocturnal festival the gnomes appeared, queer little men with long beards, who came tripping along laden with all sorts of dainties, and were received by the elves with shouts of joy. They were allowed to sit on the grass beside them and share their banquet, to which they contributed sweet fruit juices and delicious fruit. The water and mountain folk talked together for several hours, during which time an elf mother ran once or twice to the baby that lay near the rascal, to see if it was sleeping. Then the gnomes turned up their noses, beckoned to each other, pointed to the sky, where the first dim light of dawn was appearing in the east, took leave of the elves with many bows, and skipped hastily off to the forest, in which they vanished. The elves, too, felt the morning air and prepared to depart. Just at that moment the young rascal was possessed by the idea that he would play them a trick. At first he had had such a dread and horror of them that it almost stifled his breath. But after he had watched them awhile, and found them so beautiful and

merry, so delicate and dainty, all fear had vanished and he did not believe that they could do him any harm. So, yielding to his natural spitefulness, he crept gently to the elf child, which was sleeping sweetly near him with its little fists tightly shut, hastily picked it up, and ran with it as fast as he could out of the rushes, across the clearing to the edge of the wood.

The elves saw him as soon as he stood up, and uttered a loud cry. Some sprang nimbly into the pond, others hastened to their children to protect them. A shriek of horror told the fugitive that the young elf mother had discovered the theft of her child. He turned his head and saw that several elves were pursuing him. Laughing scornfully, he increased his speed in order to reach the forest. Then there was a rushing noise in the air, fierce shouts echoed through the glade and across the pond, a strange whistling and hissing were heard, the rascal looked back again, and now he saw a large number of terrible serpents, which dashed out of the water and chased him with tremendous bounds. Terror seized him, he dropped the stolen child, and ran as if Satan and all his imps were at his heels.

Though the little elf fell softly on the moss, it was waked by the shock, and began to cry piteously. At the same moment a lively cock began to crow in the distant village, a heart-rending shriek answered him from the woodland meadow, then all was still. The wicked youth ran on with all his might, and did not stop until he had come out of the forest and saw his village before him. He was glad that he had escaped from the serpents, and did not trouble himself at all about the elf child whom he had left in the woods.

The cock's crow had risen on the morning air before the mother had reached it, and the elf, in spite of her despair, was obliged to return to the pond without her child. The baby remained all alone on its bed of moss, weeping loudly, the forest animals came running from every direction to guard it, warm it, and lull it to sleep again. The hares sat close about it, the roes surrounded it in close ranks, the squirrels fanned the flies away from it, even a few lynxes which were left in the wood forgot their usual bloodthirstiness against the other forest creatures, passed their rough tongues tenderly over the child's little face, that they might not hurt its silken-soft skin, and kept guard against foxes and badgers, which they would not allow to come near the infant. A hind gave the little elf its milk to drink, and after it was satisfied, it fell asleep.

The sky gradually brightened and began to glow with the hues of dawn, as two dogs, barking violently, ran up to the slumbering child. The animals that were lying and standing around it ran away from the baying, and were pursued for some distance by the dogs, until a shout brought them to a stand. A young forester, who had come into the wood with them before daybreak, called them back, for it was mating time and against

the law to hunt game. The dogs returned and found the elf child, before which they stood a long time, snuffing it, and then, with uplifted forepaw, from time to time, giving a loud "wuff."

The forester thought that they had found some kind of game, hurried to them, and was greatly surprised to see a sleeping child in the moss. He hoped at first that its mother was near, and had the neighborhood searched by his dogs. But, after circling around for a long distance, the intelligent animals returned without having discovered any human creature, so the forester took the child in his arms and carried it carefully to the forest house, five miles away.

"What sort of prey are you bringing there?" cried the chief forester in astonishment, when his assistant entered his room with the child. The young man told him that he had found it in the forest, near the elf pond, and asked what he should do with the foundling.

The chief forester, who had a sickly wife, numerous children, and a small house, looked troubled, and said: "It is certainly a beautiful baby, and I would gladly rear it, but that won't do; there are plenty of us here already. The child must be taken to the orphan asylum."

As soon as he spoke, he had his carriage brought, drove to the city with the child, and left it at the asylum. He had not looked at it on the way, that his heart might not be too heavy when he was obliged to part with it.

At the orphan asylum they found that the baby was a

little girl. Everybody admired its beautiful little face, its dainty limbs, its fine coverlet, pillow, and clothes, and supposed it belonged to an aristocratic family. No distinction was made between the children in the institution, all were treated alike. The elf child was named Irene, for the saint of the day on which she was found, the garments which looked as if they had been woven from moonbeams were taken from it, a little shirt and jacket made of coarse, brownish yellow cloth, woollen socks, and a small cap were put on, and she was laid in a very hard bed with another child.

Irene felt the harsh touch of the coarse clothes on her tender skin, and began to cry violently. But no one came to her. The children were allowed to cry until they were tired and fell asleep. So Irene soon saw that it was useless to grieve, and gradually became used to the rubbing of the hard cloth. She was obliged to grow used to many other things besides: to the bottle which she received, instead of her mother's breast, to being washed rarely and not thoroughly, to being left alone for hours, to having no loving arms clasp, carry, and rock her, or tender glances meet her blue eyes, when she gazed around seeking something, she herself did not know what.

Weeks, months, and years passed away. Irene grew in the usual way. She could soon stand, walk, and run, in doing which she often fell down, bumped her forehead, and made her little nose bleed. She learned to talk, and to make dolls out of rags and shavings; for there were no playthings in the orphan asylum, and, before she was five years old, she was obliged to do regularly light tasks, such as picking over coffee beans, shelling peas, and washing vegetables.

The nurses, teachers, and children in the asylum had always noticed that Irene's eyes sparkled strangely, as if blue flames were blazing in them; but they thought it was a disease, and had the oculist of the institution examine them. He gazed a long time into the shining blue eyes, shook his head, prescribed a harmless eye wash and said it would pass away in time; the child would outgrow the trouble.

Irene, of course, had not the slightest remembrance of her origin; for she had been too small when the wicked rascal dragged her away. She did not know what it was to rest on a mother's breast, to be embraced by a mother's arms, to feel the kisses of a mother's lips. But when on fine days, at recess, she was in the courtyard of the orphan asylum, and went to the fence which separated it from the street, she saw little girls passing by holding their mothers' hands, and such a longing seized upon her that her little heart quivered, and tears ran down her cheeks. The other children who were there called her a cry-baby, and the matron threatened not to let her go outdoors any more if she wept in that way without any reason; for people in the street would think that the orphan children were badly treated, and the institution would get an ill name.



"She saw little girls passing by holding their mothers' hands."



Something else was noticed, which brought many scoldings and even punishment upon Irene. As soon as she went outside of the door, either to breathe the fresh air in the courtyard or to walk in a long, dreary line with the other orphans, the birds of the sky flew from every direction, — sparrows, swallows, doves, singing birds, crows, even the most timid little birds of prey, such as hawks, sparrow-hawks, and kites, fluttered around her head with low cries, swept past her ears as if they wanted to whisper something quickly to her in their flight, and would not be driven away from her. The throng of birds frightened the other children, so that they scattered screaming. The matron reproved Irene for the disturbance, for she was certain that the child did something to draw the birds, and did not believe her when she protested that it was not her fault. She was considered a sneak and a liar, who, in some unknown way, had learned sly, secret arts; and one day the superintendent of the institution said that Irene was probably a gypsy's child, who was obeying the promptings of her nature; they must keep a sharp eye on her, or she would never amount to anything good; the teachers distrusted her, the children shyly avoided her and, in spite of her gentle disposition and her beauty, she was eyed askance by everybody in the institution and always left to herself.

Lonely, unhappy, and silent, she had nearly reached her eighth year when one day a little girl of her own age, who in a great railway accident had lost father, mother, brothers, and sisters, and was the only one of her family left, was brought to the asylum.

Little Elizabeth—this was the poor child's name—was already wise enough to understand fully her cruel fate. She had been the spoiled darling of her parents, and now she met with nothing but indifference. lived in comfort, and now learned the meaning of poverty. Instead of her pretty clothes, she wore the coarse, shapeless uniform of the institution. Instead of being dressed and undressed by her loving mother, she was obliged to do this for herself, and was scolded if she was clumsy at it. She wept quietly and constantly, until it almost broke Irene's heart. Timid and reserved as she was to others, she went to little Elizabeth, spoke gently to her, and begged her to cheer up. But Elizabeth only shook her head, sobbing: "Oh, I cannot, I cannot! Why wasn't I killed, too? Then I would now be with my mother. I cannot live without my mother."

"Yes, you can," replied Irene; "see, I have never known my mother; I believe I never had any. Yet I live."

"If you have had no mother," said Elizabeth, through her streaming tears, "then you do not know what it is to lie in her arms, or how it feels when she is gone."

"No, I do not know," replied Irene, sadly.

"But I know," cried Elizabeth, with a fresh outburst of grief, "and I cannot live without my mother. What is the use of living, if nobody loves me?"

"I will love you," said Irene, earnestly. Elizabeth looked at her with her wet eyes, and threw herself impetuously into her arms.

This had happened in the dormitory, before the children went to bed. Others had seen how the two hugged each other, and the next day at recess they went to Elizabeth, took her aside, and warned her against intimate friendship with Irene. Some called her the little girl with the diseased eyes, others the bird witch, a third the gypsy child. All said that she was a queer, unsocial creature, whom the teachers and matron did not like. Elizabeth, it is true, did not allow herself to be misled by the little slanderers, but she repeated everything to her new friend. Irene took the evil gossip and the enmity of her companions so much to heart that she could neither eat nor sleep, and was constantly in tears, which prevented her from doing neatly the sewing on which she was now engaged. In punishment the matron locked her up in a dark room. Elizabeth would not be separated from her, and wept and screamed so violently that she was whipped and also locked up in a room. When she was let out again, she was forbidden to walk or talk with Irene in the future, and threatened with severe punishment if she did not obey.

Irene met Elizabeth for the first time after her release from the dark room in the dormitory. When she rushed up to her and threw herself into her arms, Elizabeth whispered in her ear: "We must take care, the teacher has forbidden me to talk or walk with you or I shall be punished. But I will not give you up, even if I am."

"You shall not be punished on my account," said Irene, and went away from her, weeping silently. Both children were unable to sleep that night from sorrow. When all the others were in a sound slumber, Elizabeth rose softly from her hard bed, stole to Irene's, and saw that she, too, was lying awake.

"I can bear it no longer," said Elizabeth, in a low tone.

"Nor I," replied Irene, in the same voice.

"Irene, let us get up and go away."

"But where, Elizabeth?"

"Wherever our feet may carry us, sister; any place is better than this."

"Now? This very moment? In the dark night?"

"No. The house is locked now. We cannot get out. But early to-morrow morning when we are dressed. Then it will be light, and the door will be opened and we can run away. Directly after breakfast. Will you, Irene?"

"I will, Elizabeth," said Irene. The two children hugged each other affectionately. Elizabeth went back to bed comforted; Irene was somewhat consoled, too, and both fell asleep.

Little attention was paid in the morning to the children who were large enough to dress themselves alone, so it was not difficult for Irene and Elizabeth to slip unnoticed out of the wash room, beside the dormitory, into the courtyard, and from there into the street. When they were outside, they began to run, and kept on straight ahead until they were completely out of breath. Dogs chased them barking; but when they reached Irene, they snuffed at her, wagged their tails, and turned back.

The two little girls had left the city behind them, and found themselves in the open fields. Seeing that no one was pursuing them, they went more slowly in order to recover their breath.

"Oh, dear Irene," said Elizabeth, "how hungry I am!"



"I cannot give you your breakfast, sister," replied Irene, sadly.

They were just under a tall tree, where many crows had built their nests. Irene had scarcely spoken when the whole flock of crows flew up screaming, and vanished in the direction of the city. The children had not gone much farther when they heard above them a great rustling of wings and loud bird calls. It was the crows, which, returning from the city, dropped all sorts of things before the children and flew back to their tree again with the speed of lightning. Elizabeth stooped and picked up in paper horns small cakes and juicy cherries. She did not stop long to wonder, but divided lovingly with Irene, and both ate till they were satisfied. Then they walked on and on, the sun rose higher in the heavens, it was almost noon, and Elizabeth again began to complain, "Oh, dear Irene, I am so warm!"

"So am I, sister," answered Irene.

"And I am so hungry and tired!" Elizabeth went on.

"So am I," answered Irene.

"I can go no farther, Irene."

"I see a wood over there, Elizabeth; let us go to it. We shall find shade, and can rest a little while."

Irene held out her hand to her little friend and, with her help, she dragged herself to the edge of the wood, where they threw themselves down in the soft moss under the shade of the first tree. Irene sat down by her side, exclaiming, "If the crows would only come back now, and bring us more little horns of cakes and cherries!"

She had hardly spoken the words when there was a cracking and rustling in the underbrush, the bushes parted, and a hind sprang out and stood beside Elizabeth. The child started up with a cry of terror; but Irene said soothingly: "Don't be frightened, sister, the

animals will do us no harm. They have kinder hearts than human beings."

In truth, the hind licked Elizabeth's face with her big tongue, lay down by her side on the ground, and showed her full udder, from which drops of milk were trickling. Then Elizabeth understood that the kind animal wanted to feed her, and she began to suck the teat. When she was satisfied, Irene followed her example. Refreshed by the milk, and wearied by the unusually long walk, the heat, and the wakeful night, the two children lay down on the moss, and in a few minutes were sound asleep.

When they opened their eyes again, they saw the hind, which had kept faithful watch beside them all the time, and now knelt before Irene, turned her head toward her, and seemed to be inviting her to get upon her back.

"The dear friend wants to carry us," said Irene; "we will ride a little, Elizabeth." She helped the little girl to mount the hind. Irene climbed up behind her, and when the animal felt the children on its back, it rose and trotted carefully, that they might not lose their balance, into the forest.

"Oh, this is nice," said Elizabeth, sighing; "I could not have walked any farther. My legs ache so, and my feet are so sore."

They had slept many hours without knowing it, and now the sun was low, and the summer day was drawing to a close. The hind pressed farther and farther into the forest, the air grew cooler, the shadows became darker, and suddenly the children reached the wide clearing, where lay the broad pond as smooth as a mirror. The hind knelt down on the shore, shook herself a little, so that the children could not help sliding gently from her back into the grass, then sprang up, and in a few bounds was again in the forest, where she vanished.

"What shall we do now?" asked Elizabeth, anxiously.

"I don't know," replied Irene, softly.

"I am so frightened," Elizabeth added, hiding her face on her little friend's breast.

"Why?" asked Irene, stroking her hair caressingly.

"It's so still and lonely here, and the mists are rising from the water. Night will soon come, and then we shall be all alone in the wild woods. What will become of us? Who will give us anything to eat to-morrow? And where shall we find a house and a bed?"

"Don't be troubled, sister. Perhaps I am really a gypsy child, as our naughty companions called me. I am not afraid in the forest. We shall find our way through it, and the kind animals will help us do so."

But Elizabeth shuddered and began to cry. "I am too miserable, sister," she said, "and life is too hard. I wish I was with my mother."

"Where you want to be, I want to be, too," replied Irene, embracing her warmly.

Owls and bats began to fly noiselessly over the chil-

dren, and the bell-like tones of the bullfrogs were heard.

"Irene," said Elizabeth, "I will not suffer any longer. Look, the water before us is deep and cool. I shall sleep well at the bottom. I want to go down there."

"Then I will go with you," answered Irene.

The two little girls rose, kissed each other, clasped hands, and let themselves slip from the shore into the pond.

Just at this moment the sun set, and at the same time countless elves rose with loud shouts from the still water, caught the two children in their arms, and carried them to the shore.

"An elf child!" cried one, when she had looked into the sparkling eyes of Irene, who was gazing at her in timid surprise. "Your lost little one, Woglinde," exclaimed a second. Then Woglinde, with a piercing cry, rushed forward, cast one glance at Irene, clasped her impetuously in her arms, and, laughing and weeping, covered her with a thousand kisses.

Irene now learned for the first time how a child feels in its mother's arms. It was so warm! It was so soft! It was so happy! And it was so sweet to feel her mother's kisses on cheeks and lips, eyes and hair, and to return them. She understood poor little Elizabeth's grief at losing this joy, after she had once known it; and after the first exchange of caresses with her newfound mother, she gently released herself from her arms,

saying, "Beautiful mother, let me go to my sister Elizabeth, she is all alone."

The child was sitting on the shore, dripping wet and trembling, weeping quietly. Several elves were standing near, staring at her, and not knowing exactly what to do with the little girl. Irene made her way between them, hurried to Elizabeth, embraced her, and said, "Ah, Elizabeth, I am so happy; just think, I have found my mother in the water."

"Why did not I, too?" wailed Elizabeth, weeping still more violently.

"Be calm, sister," replied Irene, trying to comfort her. "My mother will take you, too, and then she will have two children."

The elf Woglinde smiled, patted the wet cheeks of the mortal child, and was preparing to take off her dripping garments, as well as her Irene's, clothe them in the glittering elf veils, adorn them with pearls and rubies, and refresh them with sweet juices. The nightingales were singing, the crickets chirped, the elves stood watching curiously, and the gnomes also came up, shaking their bearded heads in astonishment and dissatisfaction at this strange adventure.

Meanwhile the elf queen had also risen from the pond with her little gold crown in her hair, and while her subjects were dressing her and adorning her with jewels, they told her that Woglinde's stolen child had returned and, with her, a little mortal.

The queen ordered the two little girls to be brought before her, kissed Irene kindly, and said to her in her silver-toned voice: "Welcome to your home, little daughter. We will keep you in the palace below until you have lost the unpleasant human odor. But you must send this little mortal child back to her relatives; for we will have no human beings with us."

When Elizabeth heard this, she clung to Irene and whispered in her ear: "I will go back into the water again. That is the best place for me."

But Irene threw her arm around her neck, and said to the queen: "I will not leave my Elizabeth. If she cannot stay here, I will go with her. And you will come with us, won't you, beautiful Mother?"

Woglinde flushed and paled, struggled with herself, and suddenly threw herself at the elf queen's feet. "Queen Mother," she entreated, "be gracious, make an exception for once. Permit the mortal child to live among us."

"That I cannot do," replied the queen, raising Woglinde. "It is against the law of nature, which is our law. No mortal can live among us. Your little daughter has the choice of parting from her playmate, or giving up her elfin rank."

"I will give it up," cried Irene, firmly.

"And so will I," said Woglinde, clasping both children in her arms.

A great wailing and lamenting arose among the elves,

and a murmur of disapproval among the gnomes. No one thought that night of dancing, games, and banquets. The elf queen tried to change Woglinde's resolution: but when she saw that the elf would not lose her child for the second time, she ordered the gnomes to provide her with an outfit. They obediently hurried away, and instantly returned with a large quantity of gold and gems, handsome new mortal clothes, a carriage, and two splendid horses. The treasures were packed on the carriage, Woglinde entered it with the two children, the elf queen, after having taken leave of her, gave her permission to come to her sisters' summer night festivals, but without the mortal child, and, just before dawn, all the elves kissed Woglinde and Irene for the last time, and went sorrowfully back into the pond. At the first cock crow the wise horses started, and, when the sun rose, they were outside of the wood with the carriage and its inmates. They needed neither curb nor whip, but trotted straight to the city and stopped in front of a beautiful house, with a fine garden, which was just for sale. Woglinde bought it with her gold, and, when she moved into it, all the birds in the garden flew up and greeted her as their mistress. The kitchen tenants, too, — the mice and other vermin, — came timidly and wanted to pay their respects to her; but as Elizabeth was afraid of these creeping, swarming creatures, Woglinde ordered them to leave the house, which they humbly did at once.

The gnomes' treasures had made Woglinde a rich lady and, as she was so beautiful and looked so aristocratic, the neighbors thought she was some foreign countess who had moved to their city, invited her to their houses and tried to become acquainted with her. She was soon the most courted lady in the city, was presented at court, and one of the king's courtiers wanted to marry her. But she only smiled at it, and replied that she did not wish to marry again, but desired to devote herself to the education of her children.

She used her connections and her influence, however, to discover the malicious rascal, who, years before, had stolen her child. And she succeeded. The youth, meantime, had grown to manhood, and continued to do all the mischief that was possible in the village. Woglinde determined to punish him as he deserved. Going alone to the forest meadow one night, she begged the queen for more gold. The gnomes again brought a load of it, and Woglinde placed it in the garden of a widow, who was said to be the most spiteful, quarrelsome, shrewish woman in the village. This hateful creature found the treasure in the morning, and rejoiced loudly over it. Everybody learned, with the speed of lightning, that she had grown enormously rich in a single night, and several fearless young men hastened, in spite of her evil reputation, to sue for her hand. Among them was the good-for-nothing, who thought, "I can probably manage you." She preferred him to

the others, married him, and then he was soon made to see that he could not cope with her. She ruled the house, kept him under strict discipline, beat him with fists and cane, and tormented him day and night till he was often tired of life. This was his punishment for all the miserable tricks which he had played in his youth.

But Irene and Elizabeth grew up into beautiful girls, and, when they were twenty years old, the elf child married a great artist and Elizabeth a prince, and though Woglinde often longed for the fairy palace at the bottom of the pond, she was on the whole happy in the happiness of her children, both of whom had become equally dear to her.

THE RICH DOG AND THE POOR DOG



## THE RICH DOG AND THE POOR DOG

He was called Rough-leg, and he deserved the name. He was probably the very ugliest dog that ever was seen: long-legged, rough-haired, with pointed ears lopping down a little at the ends, a long nose, and yellow eyes. Nobody could have told to what breed he belonged. He had the head of a wolf, the legs of a hound, the body of a bull-dog, the hair of a Spitz, the bushy tail of a setter, and the color of a badger dog. He was thin as a herring, and as dirty as a sewer cleaner. Matted tufts of hair hung from his body like the rags of a tramp. His torn ears told tales of many a fierce fight. The violence and perseverance with which he bit and scratched showed what an unpleasant multitude of hopping brown guests he had in his dirty hide.

But under this ugly hide Rough-leg had excellent qualities. He was as strong as a bear and as brave as a lion, but he was also faithful as a good dog ought to be, and good-natured, even though he fared very badly, and had every reason to complain of his fate.

Fortune certainly did not favor him. He belonged to an old seissors-grinder, who went with his cart from village to village. He had to help drag the things for him, and his master gave him very little to eat, because he usually had nothing himself, but plenty of kicks and blows when he wanted to vent on somebody his rage for earning so little.

Yet Rough-leg always forgave his master for everything. When the old fellow was drunk, — and that happened every time he had a few pennies to buy a drop of something strong, — he was kind to Rough-leg, patted him, and talked to him like a sensible, beloved companion. And when he had poured out his heart to him, he lay down wherever he was, in the grass, the moss in the forest, or in the ditch by the road, and began to snore, while Rough-leg stretched himself beside him, and watched his sleep and the cart, which was everything in the world that his master could call his own.

One evening the old scissors-grinder, after a carouse, again fell asleep in the ditch, and did not wake any more, for he was dead. Rough-leg perceived that there was something strange about his master, when he no longer heard him snore. He snuffed at him, licked his face, pushed him with his muzzle, scratched his breast with his paws, and when the old man, in spite of everything, still lay silent and motionless and began to grow cold, Rough-leg set up such a terrible howling that all the dogs for miles around answered, and very early in the morning people came running up, who saw that the old man had died in the night.

They wanted to take away the body and the cart,



"Rough-leg perceived that there was something strange about his master."



but Rough-leg thought he must not allow it, and rushed furiously at everybody who came near. The constable drew his sword, and would certainly have killed him if he had not jumped away from his blows and thrusts. But he did not escape the sticks and stones of the peasants, who beat him unmercifully until he saw that he

could do nothing against them. So he no longer tried to prevent their taking the body away, and dragged himself off a short distance, badly hurt, whining and

moaning as they carried his master to the village churchyard.

There was not much ceremony over the poor

scissors-grinder. After a few official inquiries, and a little writing, he was put into a grave, and then nobody thought

any more about him. Rough-leg had dragged himself to the churchyard, and watched behind a tombstone, as they laid his master in the earth and filled up the grave. When all the people had gone, he crept out of his hiding place, went to the fresh mound, and began with the greatest energy to dig his master out. He had already made quite a large hole when the grave-digger

saw him and ran forward with uplifted shovel and loud shouts. Rough-leg saw that he could do nothing against the angry armed man, so he limped out of the churchyard, and the grave-digger locked it. It was impossible to jump over the wall again, it was too high. He could not stay with his master's body, so he went back to the place where he had died, and lay down on the edge of the ditch, determined not to leave the spot.

Near by was a castle with a large garden in front, separated from the road by a fence. Here, surrounded by her servants, lived an old countess, who had a pugdog, of which she was extravagantly fond. His name was Darling; he was yellow, with a black face, and a little short, stubby figure. He was a very aristocratic dog. His hair looked well kept, for he was bathed, perfumed, brushed, and combed every day. On his left forepaw he wore a gold bracelet, around his neck a white collar with a light blue border, and when he went out, he had a fine cloth blanket with a silk lining, on one corner of which a coronet was embroidered. If it had rained before his walk, he wore rubber shoes to keep his paws from being wet or muddy.

He was very handsome in his rich clothes and costly jewelry, but all these fine things gave him no pleasure. They were only troublesome. How gladly he would have run barefoot through the puddles, and trotted along in the dust. How gladly he would have shaken off the heavy clothes and, with nothing but his smooth

skin, raced about like the other dogs, whom he envied when he watched them through the fence of the castle courtyard running, jumping, rolling, and romping with each other to their hearts' content. He was not allowed to join them. A servant of his own constantly watched to prevent his having any acquaintance with strange dogs. His prison was his mistress's room. Only twice a day would she let him go out a short time in the castle yard, under the care of a man, usually on a leash, to get a little exercise, breathe the fresh air, etc. These walks were so tiresome that he preferred to stay with the old countess. From lack of exercise, and an oversupply of dainties and rich food, he became a shapeless lump of fat, grew short-breathed, gouty, and had a perpetual itching of the skin, so that, though he was kept so clean, he was obliged to scratch as often and as hard as poor Rough-leg, who had never made acquaintance with brush and comb, warm bath or soap.

The discovery of the dead scissors-grinder in the ditch had brought a great crowd before the castle fence, and the castle servants had also run out to look. Darling was there, too, pressing his black face, with its snub nose and short muzzle, against the rails to see what was going on. When the people set upon Rough-leg with clubs and swords, and almost broke his bones, the pug was furious, and barked as loud as his short breath would permit. The human beings did not understand, but he knew Rough-leg's faithful heart, and would have

gone to help the dead man's friend, whom they so unjustly abused, if he had only been able.

Lying on his dark blue velvet cushion in his mistress's room, he thought all day long of the scene which he had witnessed the day before. The dog outside there was shamefully abused; he was apparently of the most humble origin, he was certainly ill-bred, rough, not even clean; he was dirty and ragged. But he was much better than he, the aristocratic pug, the trained and wealthy pet.

The strange fellow owed his master nothing, for he had not even fed him, his leanness showed that. And vet he was faithful to him unto death; he would not leave his lifeless body; he would rather endure the most cruel treatment than to neglect his duty as guard. Would he, Darling, have been capable of such heroic steadfastness? He perceived with shame that it was doubtful. His mistress spoiled him. She was rich and titled. Her rank made every one treat her with respect, and on her account he, too, received the honor due to the pug of a lady of quality. She fed him with cake and roast beef. And yet, if she should die, he would not show his teeth at everybody who came near, and he would not expose himself to any special danger of being beaten with swords and clubs. These thoughts filled him with self-reproach and, at the same time, with admiration for the ugly cur on the high-road, who seemed to him a model of faithful duty.

When Darling, attended by his servant, was allowed to go out again into the castle courtyard that evening, he waddled to the fence as fast as his fat and shortness of breath would let him. He at once saw Rough-leg, who had returned from the churchyard, and was lying in the ditch with closed eyes, his nose between his forepaws, moaning.

"Here! You! Come over to the fence!" called Darling. Rough-leg took no notice.

"You are a brave dog! You have my full respect and friendship!" Darling went on. "I must have a chance to press your paw. Unluckily I can't get out to you."

He was so unused to talking loud, that it made him cough and at the same time the itching began, which tortured him so much that he fairly writhed, because his fine blanket and handsome collar and harness prevented him from scratching to his heart's content.

Rough-leg now raised his head, opened his eyes, and blinked at him. "Does anything ail you?" he asked in his hoarse voice.

"Oh, dear, I am so miserable!" replied Darling, piteously, when he had recovered his breath. He took no offence at plebeian Rough-leg's familiarity. "But don't let us talk about me, but you. I suppose you loved your master very much?"

"I had no one but him, and he had no one but me in the whole world. I will not outlive him." "Listen to reason, my dear fellow," cried Darling, in horror. "Surely you don't mean to kill yourself?"

Rough-leg made no answer.

"Your master was a poor tramp," Darling continued.

"Like me," interrupted Rough-leg, growling.

"Well, then, surely you owe him nothing. He has not been able to do anything for you. He is dead. You can't change that. Now think of yourself. What are you going to do?"

"Nothing. I shall stay here."

"In the night? On the bare ground? Under the open sky?"

"I'm used to it."

"You have no rheumatism and no asthma, like me. I should die. And who will give you your food?"

"Nobody. I want to starve to death."

Darling pitied the despairing fellow more and more. "Be sensible, dear friend and cousin," he said. "We must learn how to find comfort. What would become of us if people took everything so much to heart? I pity you. I'll do what I can for you. Wait, I'll bring you something to eat presently." He waddled away from the fence, back into the castle, and up to his old countess, from whom he begged. She gave him, as usual, with many pats and loving words, a piece of nice cake. He scarcely thanked her by a hasty lick of the hand and a quick wag of the tail, and hurried back to the fence, which he reached panting for breath.

"Here, friend, I have something good for you. But you must come into the courtyard to me. I can't get out," he called to Rough-leg, who was still lying just where he had left him.

Rough-leg rose and came slowly forward. Darling's sympathy cheered him a little in his loneliness. When he reached the fence, Darling pushed the bit of cake under it and wagged his tail eagerly. He was rejoicing to think how nice the dainty would taste to the poor, starved fellow. Rough-leg drew it out with his paw, snuffed at it, and then left it.

"Who can eat such stuff as that?" he growled.

"But that's cake, my dear fellow!" cried Darling, in astonishment; "that's the very nicest thing there is!"

"I don't know anything about it. It's not fit for sensible dogs. If you have a bone, I should like it. If not, leave me alone."

Darling shook his head, but went back into the castle, looked into the garbage pail, which he usually was not allowed to meddle with, and found a big bone, which he dragged to the fence. "Here is a bone, since you want it," he said; "but I can't understand how you can do anything with this dry, hard thing."

Rough-leg made no reply. He raked the bone out from under the fence with his strong paws, broke it in two with one bite, cracked and splintered it, and, in the shortest possible time, reduced it to very small pieces and swallowed it. Darling watched the work of his new friend's powerful wolf jaws with mingled admiration and horror. When the latter had finished, he turned toward the fence, licked Darling's muzzle with his big tongue, and muttered: "Thank you. You are a good fellow."

Darling's heart leaped with joy. "Ah, if I could only get out to you!"

"Come, then," answered Rough-leg.

"I dare not," whined Darling, looking round anxiously for his servant who, luckily for him, was just talking with one of the countess's coachmen, without noticing the pug placed in his care.

"Are you not ashamed to be such a timid fellow?" cried Rough-leg. "The idea of a dog's allowing himself to be forbidden a little run." He turned as if to go away.

"Don't go," called Darling. "I will try to slip out."
He went cautiously to the gate, which was only ajar, and, seeing that the servant was still talking, he ventured to steal out.

"Now run," said Rough-leg, breaking into a long, swift trot. Darling tried with all his might to keep up with him. But he could not do it. After a few minutes he fell breathless on the ground and writhed there panting and moaning. Rough-leg looked at him a moment scornfully, and yet compassionately, seized him by the skin of the neck, and carried him along in his mouth, as a mother dog does her puppies. It

seemed to give him no more trouble than if Darling had been a feather. He ran on until the castle was entirely out of sight, then set him on the ground and wagged his tail kindly.

"How good you are," sighed Darling, who had recovered his breath while in his friend's mouth. But now the excitement brought on the itching again, and he scratched piteously, yet without success, on account

of the cloth blanket and other things he had on his body.

"Booby," growled Rough-leg, after watching him awhile.

He rushed upon Darling so violently that he frightened him and, with a few bites, tore



the fine blanket and collar from his body in ribbons, broke the bracelet from his paw with one snap, and said, "There, now you look like a decent dog again, and I need not be ashamed of being seen in your company."

Darling had never felt so comfortable since he could remember. He could scratch himself to his heart's content, and already the itching was less because he was entirely undressed and the fresh air blew freely all around him. Yet, glad as he was, he thought with a few pangs of conscience of his old mistress, and murmured — "What will they say at the castle?"

"You can go back there, if you repent," replied Rough-leg, harshly, moving as if he were going to trot along.

"Don't go away," Darling begged anxiously. "Don't leave me alone, I shall be lost without you."

"Then hold your tongue, and come."

It had grown dark. Rough-leg's bones still ached from the beating he had had, he was tired out, and he saw that his companion was exhausted. So leading him to a hay-rick in a ploughed field, he said, "We'll spend the night here." He dug out a hole in the hay, pushed the tender Darling in, and lay down before him. Darling slept better than he had ever done before. It was very different lying on the hay from being on a velvet cushion in a curtained, closed apartment. He scarcely felt even the pains in his limbs, because his friend had warmed him with his big, strong body.

When he woke early in the morning, he felt like another dog. "You are a wonderful fellow, Roughleg," he said, licking his long, rough muzzle gratefully. "But I don't know what ails me — I feel so queer around my stomach —"

"You are hungry, simpleton, and so am I," replied Rough-leg.

Hungry! That was a feeling which Darling had never known, or had forgotten long ago. It gnawed very

sharply, but it was far, far pleasanter than the repugnance which his rich, costly food at the castle had inspired.

"Where shall we find anything to eat?" asked Darling.

"You must go and look," was the short answer. He snuffed a little around the hay-rick, then suddenly made a spring and drew out of a hidden sparrow's nest a peeping young bird, which he killed with one bite and tossed to the wondering Darling.

"There, eat it," he cried, and himself devoured the rest of the brood, which still remained in the nest.

Then the two went to a neighboring farm-house, and Rough-leg began to rummage in the dung-heap.

Darling was just going to follow his example, when out rushed the house dog, barking furiously, and threw himself on the pug, which with a cry of terror, fell on the ground under the shock. In an instant Roughleg was by his side, and a fierce fight began, in which the farm dog was soon beaten. Off he ran with bleeding ears and lips, howling piteously.

"You have saved my life," groaned Darling, as they hurried out of the yard.

"Nonsense!" said Rough-leg, but he ran his tongue tenderly over the pug's black face.

A new life, which he had never known before, began for Darling. He could do just as he pleased, he was always in the open air, he trotted until he was tired, and lay down to rest wherever he happened to be. He often fared badly in regard to food. He had to take just what he could get! in the best case boiled turnips some cow had dropped from her trough; in the worst, bones picked up on some dung-heap. But this poor and scanty living, from which he would formerly have turned aside with loathing, seemed excellent, and even dainty, because he saw how much Rough-leg enjoyed it. The two friends were often obliged to fight the village curs; but this no longer frightened Darling, for he knew that he could depend on Rough-leg. His health daily improved. His rheumatism and the intolerable itching disappeared, he lost flesh, and, with the extra flesh, his shortness of breath vanished; he could vie with Rough-leg in running, and soon made such progress that, to his joyful surprise, he could help a shepherd, who was driving a flock of sheep over a cross-road, as well as his nimble Pomeranian, which could not manage the work alone. The shepherd wanted to keep him, but this did not suit Darling. "When I want to enter service, I will go back to my mistress," he said, and went off with Rough-leg. In the castle the people were inconsolable over Darling's disappearance, the servant who had not watched him properly was dismissed at once, and the countess advertised that she would pay a large reward to any one who returned her pug. But no one brought him, because he was not recognized from the description

which mentioned his fine blanket, collar, and bracelet. But Darling thought of the old countess, and Roughleg of his dead master, and, after about a fortnight, the pug said one morning, "Suppose we should go and see how things are at the castle."

"Very well," Rough-leg answered, and the two trotted straight toward the castle. They were obliged to run many hours before they reached it. When they arrived, the gate stood open, and Darling walked boldly in. The servants did not recognize him, for he was as slender and active as a greyhound, and as dirty as a pig which had just come out of the mire. But his eyes were bright, his nose was moist, and his bark was as loud and long as the alarm bell in the steeple. They tried to drive him away, but he rushed upstairs to the old countess's room and scratched at her door. When she heard the familiar sound, she uttered a cry of joy, started up, and opened it as quick as she could. Darling jumped up on her and, barking loudly in his delight, licked her face. But she pushed him away in horror, for he smelled so badly and was so terribly neglected. She called for perfume and a warm bath, but Darling ran swiftly away. He would not have them any more, nor his fine clothes, gingerbread, and velvet cushions.

Rough-leg was lying outside in the ditch, waiting to see whether his rich friend would forget him or come back to him. In a few minutes Darling returned. "Won't you go into the castle with me?" he cried joyously.

"Yes, so that they can break my limbs or chain me up," growled Rough-leg.

"They must kill me first," answered Darling, urging him along.

At first the people in the courtyard wanted to illtreat the ugly tramp dog. But Darling covered him with his body, and they saw that he was his friend. The case was reported to the countess, who looked out of her window at the ugly, strong, strange dog; the affection her pug showed him touched her, and she ordered the servants to let him stay with Darling. The pug was obliged to allow himself to be thoroughly cleaned, but he would not lead his former life. So he was permitted to wander about the courtyard and high-road with Rough-leg, and only came for a quarter of an hour every morning and evening to the countess, who, however, could not bear his smell, and in spite of his caresses, was glad when he went away again. ling and Rough-leg always remained the best of friends, and the former often said: "I, the insolent rich dog, owe to you, the poor fellow, health and life. If the rich would only always make the poor their friends!"

"It would be a good thing for both," growled Roughleg, in his deep voice.

## THE LITTLE GIRL WHO TRAVELLED IN THE BIG SHIP



## THE LITTLE GIRL WHO TRAVELLED IN THE BIG SHIP

Once upon a time a steamer was going from Hamburg to South America. The ship was as large as a street of sixty houses. Hundreds of people were in her: sailors and stokers, poor emigrants, and rich ladies and gentlemen. Among them, too, was a little girl about five years old, with the dearest little round face and two short braids. Her name was Rieke, and she was the child of a young couple, who had not been very well off at home in Mecklenburg, and were going to Argentina. The father was sitting on a coil of rope in one corner of the ship, where he was out of the way of the sailors moving to and fro, studying Spanish, and the mother was busy nursing a very little sister of Rieke. During the first two or three days after leaving the Elbe, Rieke stayed with her mother. She did not yet feel at home on the ship, and was a little afraid of the engines, the various things she had never seen before, and all the strangers. Besides, she had been a little seasick, and was obliged to keep quiet, that she might not be ill. When she felt better and the cargo was stowed away, everything in order, and

the steamer far out in the open sea, she ventured to leave her mother's side and look about on board.

Climbing carefully up the iron stairs, she reached the deck. In the bow, that is, at the front end, she



stood still and let her bright blue eyes wander curiously from the water to the sky, and from the masts to the wheel. The sailors did not trouble themselves about her, for they had other things to do. Only one old man suddenly noticed her, fixed his eyes sharply upon her, and cried, "Hello, little girl, what are you doing here?"

"I am travelling, and this is my ship," she answered fearlessly.

The man burst into a loud laugh, slapped his thigh with the palm of his hand till it smacked, and cried over and over again: "Just look at the Hop-o'-my-Thumb! Such a little girl needs such a big ship to travel in!"

Then, taking her by the arm, he led her to the foremast to measure her. Rieke did not even reach to the iron ring which surrounds it near the foot. She was no taller than the leg of a riding-boot.

"It's enough to make one laugh till one is crooked,"

said the old sailor. And the mast, which had looked on, really began to laugh itself crooked and rocked to and fro, creaking and groaning, and the flag which waved at the top, that is, at the



masthead, also shook with merriment, and both of them, in their rustling, squeaking language, told the wheel about the little girl who was travelling in the big ship. The wheel

laughed till it turned and rolled so that two steersmen could hardly keep it steady, and it told the news to the davits,—the curved iron rods from which the life-boats hang over the

edge of the ship,—and the davits told the boats which they carried, and the boats told the fat, merry porpoises which were swimming beside the ship to snap up any scraps, and the porpoises gossiped about it, and so it was talked over far and wide in the sea, till the merman and his daughters heard of it too; and they were all curious to see the funny little girl who was travelling in the big ship. But they had to wait till night, for so long as it is light, they cannot come up, because they don't wish to be seen by grown people. They don't mind children.

Meantime, little Rieke had no idea that there was so much talking about her on the ship, in the air, and in the water. So she left the old sailor, who laughed heartily as he looked after her, to continue her voyage of discovery on board. She gazed in astonishment at the smoke-stacks, which looked as wide and as high as towers; she peeped timidly down the engine shaft, where huge steel rods were moving noisily up and down; glanced at the bridge, and at last reached a staircase in the middle of the ship—a staircase with a costly carpet, and shining gilt railings on both sides.

Rieke hesitated a moment, then she boldly went down the steps and into a large room, more beautiful than any she had ever seen in all her life. Mirrors and pictures hung on the walls; a thick carpet, into which the feet sank as if it were soft moss, covered the floor. Ladies and gentlemen were sitting in easy chairs or on sofas talking together, or reading books and newspapers. Rieke was standing near the door, gazing at all the splendid things she had never seen before, when a man in uniform, apparently a servant, came up and asked roughly, "Whom do you want here?"

"Nobody," replied Rieke, shyly.

"Then be off. No one is allowed here except the

first-cabin passengers." The man saw very plainly that the little girl was not travelling first-class, for she wore poor, shabby, though clean, clothes.

Rieke did not instantly understand what the cross servant wanted her to do, so she made no movement to leave the cabin. The rough man seized her rudely by the arm to lead her out. Rieke was not used to such treatment; for she was so pretty and gentle and polite that people were always kind to her. She began to cry, and said, "Let me go, you hurt me."

An elderly lady, sitting on the sofa, had seen all that had happened, and called to the child, "Come to me, little one."

Now the servant had to release her. Rieke went to the lady, who patted her fair little head, wiped her eyes and cheeks with a fine lace handkerchief, and questioned her about her home and her parents. Rieke was not at all shy, but answered plainly and sensibly. Other passengers came up, and, pleased with the brightness of the beautiful child, they all wanted to talk with and pet her. Among them was an Argentine landowner, who was going home with his wife. Their only child had died, and they went to Europe to try to escape from their sad thoughts.

"It is strange," said the gentleman to his wife, who wore deep mourning, "that poor people have such beautiful, healthy children, and we rich ones such delicate, frail darlings, whom we cannot bring up."

The lady in mourning made no answer, but she thought of her dead child, her eyes filled with tears, and, drawing the little one to her side, she kissed her again and again.

An hour passed. Rieke's parents became anxious because she did not come back, and her father went to look for her. He asked here and there if any one had seen her, and, after many questions, he found out that she was in the first cabin. He knew that a poor steerage passenger, like himself, would not be allowed to enter it, so he asked a sailor to bring his little girl. The sailor told the cross servant, and the cross servant went into the cabin and said to Rieke, "You must come to your father, he is waiting for you outside."

"Oh, what a pity!" murmured the old lady who had first noticed the child.

"Come back again very soon, directly after dinner," added the lady in mourning.

"The little girl mustn't come in; it is strictly forbidden," answered the servant, sharply. His words caused a great uproar, especially among the ladies. "We won't allow it!" cried one. "We will have the child here!" exclaimed a second. "Three weeks without a single child is far too long," said a third.

"Then you must go into the steerage, or speak to the captain," replied the man, trying to lead Rieke away.

"Let her go," said the Argentine landowner, and,

taking Rieke by the hand, he went upstairs where her father was waiting. He wanted to see him. He found a respectably-dressed young man who pleased him at once. Entering into conversation with him, he perceived that he had to deal with a modest, sensible, well-educated person.

"What are you?" he asked.

"I am a farmer."

"And what do you want to do in Argentina?"

"I shall look for a position as manager of an estate. If I prosper, and make a little money, I shall perhaps later buy or lease a farm of my own."

"That's the very thing," said the landowner. "I want a capable manager, and I prefer a German. If you suit me, you can do well in my employ."

The little girl's father gladly accepted the offer. It relieved him from all anxiety, especially as the Argentine gentleman promised a larger salary than he had hoped to receive, and proposed to have a written agreement made at once. He wanted to hurry off to his wife to tell her the good news, but the landowner stopped him.

"One thing more. My wife wants to have your little girl with her while we are on the ship. But we do not wish to separate her from her parents. So you must all move over to us. You will permit me to make your little Rieke a present of the necessary tickets?"

The change was quietly arranged with the captain,

the little girl's parents were moved to a large, airy stateroom, with a round window looking out upon the sea, and at dinner sat like princes at the first-cabin table, Rieke beside the lady in mourning, who put the daintiest morsels on her plate and gave her almost too much, so that her mother was obliged to watch carefully, that she might not be made ill.

After dinner all the passengers amused themselves with the child, who went from one to the other, talking with everybody whose language she understood. Among them was the head of a museum of ethnology, who had come to Europe to buy curiosities for his collections. He invited the whole company into his stateroom to show them his treasures. He explained the weapons, utensils, and ornaments of the ancient and modern peoples; but modestly confessed that he also had many things whose use he did not know. Taking up an oddly shaped bit of ivory, covered with carved lines, he said: "Look, I don't know what this is. Probably it may be a porridge spoon; but perhaps it is the badge of some unknown rank."

Rieke began to laugh, exclaiming, "Why, that's a shoe-horn."

"A shoe-horn?" replied the scholar in astonishment. "That is impossible. The people who made this article probably wore no shoes."

"But it is a shoe-horn," Rieke persisted, and the ladies all agreed with her. The director, shaking his

head, examined the article again very carefully, and saw in one corner a drawing which he had not noticed before. It represented a savage, with feathers in his hair and shoes on his feet, which probably could not have been put on without the help of a horn.

"You are right, little one," he said. "And since you are so clever, perhaps you can tell me what this one is, too." He gave her, with a smile, a wooden object which looked like an ordinary cross.

"That's a cross," remarked a passenger, who was standing near.

"It can't be," replied the scientist, "for it is a thousand years older than Christianity."

Rieke took the mysterious article in her hand, looked at it a moment, and said:—

"That is a winder."

"What is a winder?"

"Don't you know? It's the cross people wind yarn on to make a ball. Else how can you knit?"

"Be polite," her mother said; but the scholar cried joyfully, "Never mind, the child is perfectly right to laugh at me a little because I am so ignorant." And, turning to Rieke, he added, "I thank you, little girl; I have learned from you gladly."

After supper Rieke and her parents went back to their stateroom, where it was so much more pleasant than in the steerage. As the sea was calm, and the weather warm, Rieke's mother let her open the little round

window and put out her head. As soon as her face appeared, a voice outside called, "There is the little girl who travels in the big ship."

She looked around curiously, and saw the merman with his long beard calling his daughters out of the water, that they might see the little girl, too. Three, four, five girls' heads appeared, shaking back long, wet, green hair; their hands came above the surface of the sea, too, and clapped, and the mermaids cried, "Look at the pretty little girl who travels in the big ship."

"We'll give her something," said the merman.

"Yes, yes, yes," screamed the mermaids, diving down so quickly that the water gurgled. The next minute they were back again, and handed their father all sorts of things, which he passed up to the window on the forked end of a long piece of coral.

"Don't be afraid," he said; "take them for a keep-sake from my daughters. They were once little girls like you."

The first one gave her a mother-of-pearl shell, the second a branch of red coral, the third a pearl, the fourth a long, curved narwhale tooth, and the fifth a soft, wet, shapeless thing, which at first she did not want to touch. But the merman pushed it quickly through the window with his coral staff; then there was loud laughing outside by many voices, after which all became still, and nothing more was heard of the merman and his daughters.

Rieke's father pulled the wet thing into the window, and, looking at it, saw that it was the rolled-up skin of some unknown creature. He opened it, and was astonished at its great length and width. It had queer green and black spots, long spines on the back, a red crest on the neck, and the head ended in a snout like a turtle's. He rolled it up again, intending to show it to his fellow-passengers.

The next day, when they heard that the merman had talked with the little girl the night before and given her all sorts of beautiful things, everybody wanted to see the presents. The ladies particularly admired the pearl, but when the snakeskin was unrolled, a young man fairly leaped into the air, exclaiming:—

"The sea-serpent! The famous sea-serpent, in which people would not believe. Now we have it! Hurrah! We have the sea-serpent!" This young man was a naturalist, on his way to South America to try to make some discovery in the vast forests. He wanted to become a professor, so that he could marry a young girl, whose father would not give his consent because the lover was not a famous man, and had neither office nor title. The young naturalist told Rieke's father this, and begged him to sell him the sea-serpent's skin. For if he could describe and make a picture of it, and have a book published about it, he would become famous at once, and would certainly be a professor, and could marry the girl to whom he was engaged.

"Take the serpent's skin," said Rieke's father; "I will give it to you, and may it bring you good fortune."

The young man insisted upon paying for it, until Rieke's father grew almost angry. "I will not sell the skin for money. Every one ought to help his neighbor as he can."

The young man already saw himself sure to win his bride, and could not keep his happiness secret. He told every one of the change in his fate, and what he owed the little girl who was travelling with them. A gentleman who had been very silent and did not join the others, drew Rieke to his side, smoothed her fair hair, and said:—

"Tell me, what shall I do to get a little girl just like you?"

- "Haven't you any?" answered Rieke.
- "No," said the gentleman.
- "Why not?"
- "Because I am not married."
- "Well, then, get married," cried Rieke, so loud that everybody heard her and began to laugh.
  - "Yes, but whom shall I marry?"

Rieke looked around, pointed to a young lady sitting modestly in a corner, and said: "Marry her. She is beautiful and good."

The young lady blushed, the passengers laughed, and the gentleman went up to her and begged her pardon for having unintentionally embarrassed her. In

this way they became acquainted. It turned out that the gentleman was a very rich man who had nothing to do, and did not know how to dispose of all his money, so he went travelling over the world to pass away the time. The young lady was an orphan, going to an aunt in Brazil, so that she might not have to live alone. When they had talked together, and become better acquainted, they liked each other, and, three days later, the gentleman called the little girl and said: "Well, Rieke, I have taken your advice. I am going to marry the beautiful, good young lady." Rieke ran joyfully to her parents and told them the news, so everybody heard of the engagement, in whose honor the gentleman gave the sailors a great feast, with singing and dancing, so that pleasure reigned through the steamer, and people said, "It's very plain that there is a little girl travelling on the big ship."

The elderly lady who had first taken little Rieke's part when the cross servant tried to put her out of the cabin continued to be her best friend, and wanted to have her always near, so that the lady in mourning really grew jealous and said very seriously: "You must let me have the little girl part of the time. Her company consoles me a little for the child I have lost."

"I have lost my only child, too," replied the old lady, sadly.

The wife of the Argentine landowner wished to hear about it, but at first the other would not speak freely.

At last, however, she was persuaded to tell the whole story. She had an only child, a grown daughter. And she had lost her, but not by death. The daughter had married, against her mother's will, a man whom she did not want for a son-in-law. In punishment for such disobedience, she would have nothing more to do with her, and told every one that she no longer had a child. But she knew very well that this was not right, and she secretly longed for her only daughter, whom she had treated so harshly. True, she would receive no letters from her nor hear anything else about her, yet she had learned that she had a little girl with fair hair and blue eyes. The child must now be just about Rieke's age, and doubtless quite as pretty and amusing. The old lady could not help thinking constantly about this grandchild, when Rieke was playing by her side and talking with her, and whenever she embraced and kissed the child, which she did very often, she fancied she clasped her own little grandchild in her arms.

When the lady in black had heard this story, she urged her to forgive her daughter at once; and Rieke, who had heard everything that was said, and understood most of it, exclaimed at the same time: "Yes, yes, you must forgive your daughter and let your grand-child come here. I want to see her and play with her. I'll give her something, too, — my shell, or my pearl, or my coral, or whatever she wants. Only not my narwhale tooth. I suppose that's too big for her."

Tears filled the old lady's eyes, and, clasping Rieke in her arms, she said: "You are right, dear. I will do what you ask."

"But this very minute!" said Rieke.

"That cannot be," replied the lady, smiling through her tears, "but as soon as we land."

Rieke was satisfied, and the lady in mourning congratulated the old lady because she would now find her lost daughter and have a dear little grandchild, too. The story of the mother's forgiveness of her only daughter became known among the passengers, and the gentleman who was engaged to the orphan said: "Rieke, you are surely the angel of peace. Suppose you try to make peace for some one else."

"Whom?" asked the child.

"Do you see those two gentlemen over there, one in the right corner and the other in the left?"

Rieke looked and answered, "Yes." She had known them a long time, and had noticed that they never spoke to each other, never went near each other, and always managed to have the whole length or width of the cabin between them.

"Well, those two gentlemen are the presidents of two South American republics."

"What is that?" asked Rieke.

"It would take too much time to explain it," said the gentleman. "The countries of those two presidents have been enemies a long while, many years, and people say

that they want to make war on each other. Then a great many men will be wounded and killed."

"Little girls, too?" asked Rieke, in terror.

"Little girls, too," replied the gentleman. "So go and beg the two presidents not to make war, but be friends with each other."

Rieke did not wait to be asked twice. She went to the younger one, who looked more good-natured and had smiled at her once, and told him how terrible it would be to wound and kill people, especially little girls, and he ought not to make war. Rieke spoke German, and the gentleman understood nothing but Spanish, so he listened, smiling, and asked his neighbors what the pretty child wanted. An interpreter was at once found, who faithfully translated the little girl's words. Then the gentleman patted Rieke's cheeks, saying, "Tell all that to my colleague over there."

Rieke seized the president's hand and, though at first he resisted, she drew him with her to the other corner, and repeated to the second gentleman her entreaty for peace. The second gentleman was old, and looked gloomy. At first he frowned when the little girl's words were repeated to him. But as the first gentleman had bowed politely when he came up, he was obliged to return it, and Rieke would not go until she had received some kind of a reply. The eyes of all the passengers were fixed upon him, and unless he wanted them to take him for a very rude fellow, he could

do nothing except stroke Rieke's hair, too, and say with rather a sour smile, "Little girls don't understand

such things."

"Yes, ves," Rieke persisted, taking hold of the gloomy man's hand and putting it into the other president's. The two began to talk together. at first stiffly, then more and more cordially, and, after some time, they both went to the older one's stateroom. From that hour they were a great deal in each other's company, sat side by side at table, and after several days the good news spread through the steamer



that the two presidents had become friends, and there would be no war between their countries. The captain ordered a salute to be fired in honor of the event, the crew had another feast and more presents, and everybody on board, both passengers and sailors, perceived

that the little girl was the most important person on the big ship.

The carpenters hammered and carved for the little girl in the big ship a small ship with a big girl in it, and when, a few days after, the steamer reached South America, they gave it to her for a remembrance of her first sea voyage, on which she had won the good-will of the merman and his daughters, obtained a good place for her father, explained to the director of a museum the use of his ancient things, helped a scholar to secure fame, a professorship, and a wife, aided an old bachelor to become engaged to a beautiful orphan girl, persuaded a mother to forgive her daughter, and made peace between two hostile countries. Was not that a voyage well worth remembering?

## THE NAUGHTY BROTHER AND THE CLEVER SISTER



## THE NAUGHTY BROTHER AND THE CLEVER SISTER

ONCE upon a time there were two children, a little boy and a little girl, who belonged to poor people, a locksmith, who worked in a machine-shop, and his wife, who attended to her housekeeping and took in washing. The father was never at home, except on Sundays and holidays, and the mother had too much to do to look after the children. So they were usually left to themselves, and grew up like nettles on a refuse heap. The boy was wild and careless, and would not do as he was told. He wandered far outside of the city, and did not come home at meal times. He climbed trees and tore his trousers. He joined street urchins, fought with them, and came back with his nose bleeding and his body covered with black-and-blue spots. Who knows what might have happened to him, how often village curs would have bitten him, gypsies stolen him, or automobiles run over him, if he had not had his little sister.

True, she was a year younger than he, but she was far more sensible, always stayed with him, and prevented him from doing too much mischief. As he loved her

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dearly, he usually obeyed her, though not always, and thus was saved from worse injuries.

One summer day the brother again invited his little sister to ramble with him through the fields and woods. The little sister did not want to go, because their mother had forbidden them to stray far from home. "Well, if you won't come with me, I'll go alone," said the sly fox, pretending to set off. He knew very well that she would not let him.

"You are a regular ne'er-do-weel," she replied, but she went with him.

They walked gayly along, soon left the city behind them and were on the high-road, among farms and hedges, running in the meadows through the tall grass and clover, picking cherries, gathering flowers, and catching white and blue butterflies. So, still playing and walking happily on, they reached a wood, passed through it, and at last came to the bank of a rushing river, where they could walk no farther.

"Now we will turn back," said the little sister.

"No," replied the brother; "it is too beautiful here." He took his little sister by the hand, and drew her along by the water. At a bend in the shore he suddenly saw a little boat, tied to an old willow. Shouting with delight, he instantly sprang into the skiff, which began to rock dangerously.

"You must get out at once," screamed the little girl in terror.



"They walked gayly along, gathering flowers, and catching white and blue butterflies."



"I've no idea of it," replied the rascal; "it rocks so gloriously that I feel like a bird in the air. Jump in quick, little sister, we will have a row."

"I won't do it," said the little girl; "the boat doesn't belong to us. If the owner catches you, he will box

your ears. And mother always forbids us to go on the water."

"Mother won't see; come with me, come," said the naughty boy, untying the boat. Unless the little sister wanted to stay alone on the bank, she was obliged to follow him, whether she liked it or not.



She timidly put

first one foot and then the other in the boat, trembling a little as it rocked. Her brother laughed at her, pulled her down on the seat, and pushed the oar against the shore. The skiff moved off, at first slowly, then faster and faster. Before the children were aware of it, they were in the middle of the river, where the current was the strongest, shooting along with the utmost speed. The banks fairly flew past them. Each bend in the stream showed them new pictures: at first flowery meadows, then dark woods, finally lofty mountains, which constantly drew nearer together and cast gloomier shadows over the surface of the water. The stream flowed with tremendous force through a narrow ravine between high cliffs, its waves dashing against the rocks with a thundering roar.

"It frightens me," said the little sister, softly.

"I'm not afraid," replied the brother; "it is so wild here, and the water sings so merrily."

"But where are we going?" asked the little sister.

"I don't know, and that's just the beautiful part of it," the boy answered; "we will shut our eyes and let ourselves go — we shall land somewhere."

The little girl did so, for she was afraid of the mountains, towering so close at hand, and the raging river. Again the stream curved sharply around a projecting cliff, and both brother and sister screamed with fright. They had felt a violent shock, and were flung headlong into the bottom of the boat.

Opening their eyes quickly, they saw that an invisible power had jerked their boat out of the water and was lifting it high in the air. They raised themselves as well as they could, and now saw that the boat was in a huge net as thick as one's arm, hanging from a pole as big as a tree. This pole was held by a terrible giant, who

sat on the top of one of the high, steep cliffs that lined the shore, dangling legs ten times as long as a man's. In a trice the net was drawn up and thrown on the rock so roughly that every seam in the boat creaked. A hand so large that there was plenty of room in the palm for the little skiff reached in for it, disentangled it from the confusion of meshes, and held it before two eyes as big as cart wheels. A mouth like a barn-door opened, and a voice which echoed through the river valley like thunder said: "A good catch at last! My old woman will be pleased with it." The hand closed around the boat, and the two children saw between the fingers, as if looking through the chinks in the rafters of a steeple, that the giant rose, shouldered his net, and began to walk away. His head towered above the tallest trees, and his walk was faster than the swiftest railroad train.

The brother was half dead with fright, he howled at the top of his lungs and stammered almost unintelligibly: "Oh, dear! Oh, dear! It's all over with us."

The little sister, too, did not feel very comfortable; but she kept up her courage and reproached her brother for his useless whining. "You have brought us into the scrape," she said, "now at least keep quiet. Perhaps all giants do not eat human beings."

"Why did he fish us out of the water, unless he meant to eat us?" wailed the boy.

"He is carrying us home to his wife," said the little sister, soothingly; "we will beg the giantess very prettily to let us go home to our mother. I don't believe a woman would do children any harm, even if she is a giantess."

The brother was only half comforted; he nestled close to his sister, threw both arms around her neck, and sobbed: "Oh, little sister, help just this time. I will never be naughty again."

It was not long before the giant reached his house, built on a high, wooded mountain, and larger than the largest church that the children had ever seen. Before the door stood the giantess, smiling at her husband.

"I'm bringing you something!" he shouted in his thundering voice, while still at a long distance, waving the hand that held the boat to and fro before his face, till the children grew dizzy.

"What can it be?" asked the giantess, curiously, and went quickly into the sitting room.

The giant followed her, set the boat on the table, took the boy between his thumb and forefinger, and held him up before his wife's face: "Just look at this little Hop-o'-my-Thumb! He was floating along very happily with this other pygmy on our water, in a little nutshell, and I fished out the whole cargo of food."

The boy struggled with all his might in the fingers that held him, roared as if he were being put on the spit, and twisted his face into such ugly shapes that his little sister cried out, "Don't behave so, little brother, the master and mistress are not eating you yet."

"Not yet, little Miss Pert, not yet," said the giant, and began to laugh loudly.

The giantess took the struggling boy out of his hand, put him on the table, where he again fell on his little sister's neck and hid his face in her bosom, and scrutinized the little pair. Her eyes, in spite of their size, looked kind, and her face was mild and gentle, which the little sister noticed very plainly. The giantess had no children herself, and her heart grew soft when she saw these two little human creatures so near her.

"I haven't tasted any human flesh for a long time," cried the giant. "Prepare the little ones for my supper. I'll have them baked."

"No," replied the giantess, quickly, covering the children with her hand. "They are too small. Both wouldn't make you a mouthful. We must fatten them first. We have four roebucks for to-night, besides two pecks of potatoes and a hundred weight of cherries. Let me have the children awhile for playthings."

"Well, for aught I care," growled the giant, and went out to put away his fishing tackle.

The giantess, when she was left alone with the children, sat down before the table, looked at the two a long time in silence, then as the boy was the larger, leaned nearer to him, and said in a voice which she tried to make very gentle: "Don't be frightened, little mouse.

I will do you no harm if you are very good and sensible, Will you be?"

"Oh, Lady Giantess," replied the boy, whining, and trembling from head to foot, "I'll do my best. But my sister is much nicer and more sensible than I am."



"Is this true, little one?" asked the giantess.

"We ought not to praise ourselves, Lady Giantess," answered the little sister, making a pretty courtesy.

The reply and the little girl's manner greatly pleased the giantess. She smiled and said: "We will see presently which of you two is the smarter. I will ask you three questions, and if you answer them correctly, you shall have your liberty."

The little sister clapped her hands, and, taking one of the huge fingers of the kind giantess, pressed a kiss on the tip. True, it seemed as if she had kissed the end of a log, but it pleased the giantess.

"Now pay attention," she said. "You too, boy. Why do we eat fruit for dessert, and not at the beginning of the meal?"

"Because fruit is so good," replied the brother, quickly.

The giantess shook her head. "The fruit is just as good at the beginning of the meal as it is at dessert.  $\Lambda$  bad answer. Do you know any better, little one?"

The little sister nodded, saying, "Because we could eat nothing more if the fruit did not give us fresh appetite."

"There's something in that," said the giantess. "So go on. Why is there a cock instead of a hen on the top of the church steeple?"

"Because the cock is bigger," replied the boy, "so it can be seen better."

The giantess shook her head again. "The hen can be made as large as we desire. A bad answer. Do you know a better one, little girl?"

The little sister said without hesitation: "A hen cannot be on the top of the steeple. If she lays eggs, they would fall down, and be broken into a thousand pieces."

"Rather good," said the giantess. "Now for the third question. Collect your thoughts, boy. Why do women have long hair and men short, or none at all?"

"I needn't collect my thoughts much for that," replied the boy, boldly; "because the men have their hair cut, and the women don't."

The giantess shook her head for the third time. "You would have done wisely to think the matter over. Why do not women have their hair cut? That is just the question. You have answered badly. We will see whether your sister can do better."

The little sister remembered an exclamation which she had often heard from her sorely tried mother, and said precociously, "Women must have long hair so that they can tear it out when the men commit follies."

The giantess burst into a loud laugh, ran to her husband, called him in, and told the little girl to repeat her answer. The little sister did so bravely, and now the giant laughed, too, till he had to hold his sides. "A woman will be a woman," he shouted, "whether she is as small as a mouse or as big as a house."

When the kind giantess saw that her husband was in a good humor, she said, "We will let the little ones go; there is really nothing to them yet."

"I caught them for you; do what you please with them," replied the giant, shrugging his shoulders, and he went back to his work.

He had scarcely left the room when the giantess

took the brother and little sister by the hand, went quickly out of the house and into the wood with them, and when she had reached the foot of the mountain she put them on the ground, saying: "Get away before my husband changes his mind. And since you are such a clever child, little girl, I will give you something."

Drawing out of her pocket a small silk purse, she handed it to the little sister. "Take this, and keep it carefully. Whenever you have a clever idea, you will find a gold piece in it. I think you will be a rich girl."

The little sister wanted to thank her, but the giantess hurried off with her huge strides and was out of sight in an instant.

The children were now free; that was certainly delightful, but they were all alone in the deep forest, saw no path, and did not know where they were or which way they ought to go. The brother sat down in the moss, and again began to weep bitterly. "Oh, dear, little sister, what is to become of us! How shall we ever get home to mother!"

The little sister sat down by his side and tried to encourage him; but she herself was on the point of crying, and was wondering whether the wolves might not eat them, now that they had so fortunately escaped from the giants.

Just at this moment she saw a stork flying high above them. "Stork! Hey! Stork!" she called as loud as she could, started up, and beckoned with all her might. 254

An idea had flashed through her brain. At the same moment she felt something hard in the soft little purse which she held in her hand. She opened it, a glittering gold coin shone before her. So she had had a good idea.

The stork flew slowly down, alighted on the bough of a neighboring tree, and clapped: "What is it? What do vou want?"

"Stork," said the little sister, "you have already brought us to our mother once. Take us to her again. We are lost and cannot find our way home."

"We never take a child to its mother twice," clattered the bird, preparing to fly away.

"But surely you will not leave us here to die," screamed the little sister in terror. "Please, please, be kind, we will love you very, very dearly."

The stork reflected, as is its custom, then it said: "You are too heavy for me. I'll bring a companion."

Off it flew with the speed of an arrow, but in a few minutes the children heard a great rustling in the air, and saw seven storks, which swooped straight down to them. Four seized the brother by the arms and legs, three took the little sister by the sleeves and belt, and away they went, up and down, through the blue air, over forest and field, mountain and valley, so swiftly that the children closed their eyes, that they might not grow dizzy. This lasted for some time; the children did not know how long, then suddenly there was a crashing, a fall, a rushing noise. They opened their eyes quickly and found themselves lying in their mother's bed, while the storks were soaring out of the open window.

Their mother, who had been very anxious about them, screamed with joy when she saw them, and forgot to punish them as she had intended when they did not come home to dinner. She forgave them fully when the little girl told her about the giants and showed her the giantess's costly gift, and the gold piece which had rewarded her first bright idea.

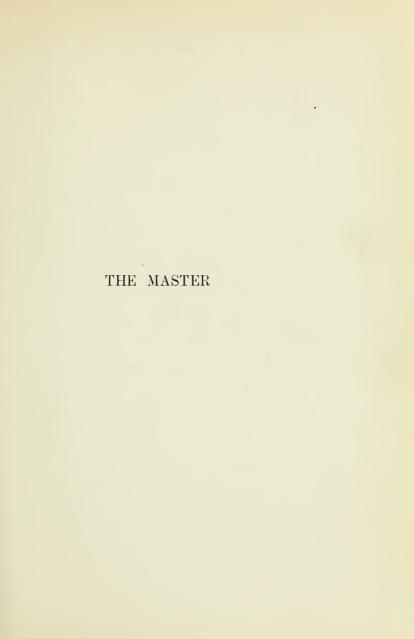
"Now we shall be rich," said the boy, who admired his little sister more than ever; "you will have lots of good ideas every day."

"I think so, too," replied the little sister, with a touch of conceit. She now devoted herself to finding good ideas. She made all sorts of smart, affected speeches, which seemed to her very clever; and whenever she thought she had said something extremely bright, she secretly felt for the little silk purse in her pocket. Only, to her surprise and anger, she found no gold piece there, and she consoled herself by thinking that the giantess had fooled her. Yet she had once found a gold piece in the purse, so it could not be a mere hoax on the part of the giantess. She thought about the matter a long time, and suddenly the idea darted through her head, "What if all the smart sayings, of which I have been so vain, were not clever ideas at all, but stupid nonsense?"

At the same moment she felt something hard in her

pocket, opened the purse with a trembling hand, and there was another beautiful glittering gold piece. So this was her first good idea since the one with the stork.

From this she learned to be modest and natural, no longer struggled to force herself to think up bright ideas, which, however, now came of themselves, — sometimes many, sometimes only a few, — but always some, so she never lacked shining gold coins; and her father no longer had to go to the machine-shop, but could build a factory of his own; and her mother no longer needed to take in washing; and her brother became a fine, well-educated young fellow, and they were all happy and remained so as long as they lived.





## THE MASTER

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl whose name was Maxa. She was a pretty child, always happy, and very inquisitive. The word which people heard Maxa say more often than any other was "Why?" She wanted to know where everything came from, and who made everything, — the flowers, the birds, the golden beetles, and the gay butterflies. When she saw a violet on which a ladybug rested, or a rose-bush with a butterfly fluttering about it, she exclaimed, "Oh, if I could only make something like that!" But her mother said, "Human beings cannot make such things."

One spring day, Maxa was playing in the garden alone. She drove her hoop to the fence that separated it from the next meadow. There she suddenly saw a man sitting on a little folding stool, with his back against the fence. Before him was an easel, supporting an unframed canvas on which he was painting. She did not feel afraid, for she was in the garden and he in the meadow, with a thick hedge between them; and, besides, he did not notice her or trouble himself about her. So she stood still, rested the hoop against the fence, kept as quiet as a little mouse, and watched. The meadow was very large

and the same of th

and rather marshy, with a low, white wall at the far end. Neither man nor beast was visible, and buttercups were almost the only flower that covered the brown earth. The canvas before the artist was still blank. He was

> just preparing to paint the sky. Under his brush appeared a beautiful expanse of blue, on which floated several

> > fleecy white clouds.

"Oh," thought Maxa, "that isn't right. The sky is perfectly clear." And she looked up to compare

But behold — the

heavens, which had just been cloudless, now showed here and there a few thin cloudlets, just as the artist had painted them.

them

He worked on industriously with his nimble brush. Maxa saw the meadow appear, but at its end in the picture, instead of the white wall, there was a green river, from which the sunshine was reflected. She glanced quickly in that direction — what did it mean? The well-known white wall had vanished, and in its place flowed a stream which she had never seen there.

The little girl wondered and watched even more

eagerly than before. Now the man was painting a row of tall poplar trees along the river bank. Yes, there in the distance rose the poplars. He scattered over his canvas red and blue flowers which she had never seen. A swift glance at the meadow showed her that everywhere, among the yellow buttercups, the strange blue and red flowers had sprung in great numbers from the brown earth. Maxa watched still more closely, and when the artist painted in one corner of his canvas a flock of shining sheep and lambs, in whose midst was a shepherd with a broad-brimmed hat and long staff, and a black dog with a white head, and in the meadow also appeared a shepherd with a broad-brimmed hat and long staff, and a lively dog with a flock of sheep and lambs, she could contain herself no longer, and cried out, "Why, everything you paint grows out of the earth!"

The artist turned quickly and looked at her. She wanted to run away, but she could not do it. She was forced to stay; she did not know why. Maxa had already noticed that he wore long hair. Now she saw that he had a long beard, and blue eyes which sparkled like the brightest stars at night.

"What! Do you see that everything I paint grows out of the earth?" he asked.

"Of course I see it. Why shouldn't I?" replied Maxa.

"Then you are a Sunday child," said the artist.

"So I am," Maxa answered. She knew this, for her

mother had often told her that the stork had brought her one Sunday afternoon.

"Yes, yes," the artist murmured, his eyes resting kindly on the beautiful little girl. "Sunday children see what forever remains invisible to others."

"And you," asked Maxa, who had grown familiar,—
"what are you?"

"I am an artist."

"What is an artist? A painter?"

He laughed. "Not every artist is a painter, and not every painter is an artist. I am an artist who paints."

"But you don't merely paint — you make a river, and trees, and little white lambs, and even a shepherd with a hat and cane and a dog. Is all this real, too?"

"It is real, since you see it."

"Then you are the one who makes the flowers and the birds, the golden beetles and the butterflies?"

"I am not the only one who makes them, but I make them too. The artist makes whatever he wishes, and what he makes is really there, whether it is things or flowers, animals or human beings."

"And do they live?"

1

"They live if there is anything living in them, and they live much longer than what nature has created, and always remain as young and beautiful as the artist has formed them."

Then Maxa clapped her hands, crying: "Oh, if I could only make them too! Won't you teach me, dear artist?"

The man with the long beard looked thoughtfully at her a little while with his sparkling blue eyes, then he said: "Every one cannot learn. But you are a Sunday child, and you have bright eyes. Perhaps I can teach you. Come, child, we will go to your mother, and ask

if she will allow you."

"But how can you get over the hedge? It is so thick, and it pricks so terribly."

"Don't be troubled," replied the artist, as he rose from his stool and waved his hand. The hedge parted and let him pass through; his stool, easel, and paint-box followed like dogs, and when they were



all in the garden, the hedge closed again. So they went to the house together,—the tall man walking in front with the little girl, the easel striding stiffly along on its three legs, the folding-chair hobbling before, and the paint-box jumping in short hops like a toad. On the way the thrushes, wrens, and blackbirds, whose nests were in the garden, flew about them, singing a joyous greeting to the artist, which he answered with a friendly nod, and the acacias and horse-chestnuts scattered blossoms on his long hair as he passed under their boughs. The cat, however, which was sunning herself on the door-step, ran hastily away. She knew nothing about art, and was afraid of the easel, and folding-chair, and paint-box, which she thought were hostile animals.

The little girl ran on before and told her mother about the stranger, as well as the easel, folding-chair, and paint-box, which had come shambling and hopping with them. But the artist left them all outside, and went in alone. He told the mother that her little daughter wanted to learn to paint; she seemed to have the right eyes for it, and she was a Sunday child, too, so she would probably succeed. He was ready to teach her until she knew as much as he did. Her mother did not object, only there must be no expense. The artist relieved her economical mind on that score, and it was settled that Maxa should become his pupil.

"Where will you have your studio?" the mother asked.

"Wherever you wish," replied the artist; "in your garden."

"In the open air, then?"

"No. If you will allow it, I'll build a little house."
The mother looked troubled. "H'm," she said,

"that will take months, and all the masons, carpenters, and locksmiths, with their noise and dirt."

"Nothing of the sort," interrupted the painter.

"Don't be afraid of either dirt or disorder. Everything will be finished in an hour, and I can invite you to inspect the building."

The artist went away, and Maxa followed him. She wanted to know how he would manage to build a house in an hour.

He found a sunny, grass-grown spot near the hedge, without trees, sat down on his folding-chair, took from his paint-box a small, new canvas, put it on the easel, reflected a moment, and then began to paint a wonderfully pretty house, which looked like a jewel box. The walls were marble, pillars stood at the right and left of the entrance, the roof was made of green copper, and through the clear panes of the large windows gleamed vellow silk curtains. And what the artist painted on the canvas actually appeared; so when the house in the picture was finished, it was also ready in the garden, and taking Maxa by the hand, the painter went in with her, sat down again, and began to paint suitable furniture, beautiful old tapestries of silk and gold threads, Turkish carpets in soft, faded hues, low, broad sofas, light gilded chairs, tall, carved, ebony wardrobes, and, for the corners and niches, coats of mail, bronze statues, and large porcelain vases. He did not forget his little friend either. For her he painted six dolls, each one in a different costume, and the prettiest of all was a fair-haired Swiss, with a silver chain on her bodice. When Maxa saw her, she fairly shouted for joy, ran to her, and, clasping her in her arms, exclaimed, "I want to show her to mamma."

"No," said the artist, "you must carry nothing out. You can only play with your dolls here in the studio, and when your mother comes, she will see them."

But he had not yet finished. When the room was magnificently furnished, he painted two young negro women in striped silk gowns, with red kerchiefs on their heads. After the last stroke of the brush, they stood alive in the studio, approached the artist, and bowed low before him and Maxa. "They are to do the work here," said the painter. "They will obey you if you order anything sensible. But they will answer only with their eyes, for they are dumb."

"Can't you make them speak, too?" asked Maxa.

"No," he answered, "I can't do that. I should have to beg other artists, the poets, to help me. But, for these negro girls, it isn't necessary."

The hour was not over by several minutes when the painter went back to Maxa's mother and invited her to visit his house in the garden. The mother was very much astonished to see the charming little marble palace, the costly furniture, the black maid-servants in their gay silk gowns, and Maxa's six dolls, and said:

"You are a clever man. I will trust my Maxa to you. She will learn something worth knowing."

Maxa came to the studio every morning. If the day was cloudy, or the master in a bad humor, he sent her away. If he was in a good mood, and the weather was sunshiny, he gave her a lesson. She went to work eagerly, and wanted to paint with brush and colors on the canvas at once. But the artist would not allow this. "You must first learn to draw well," he said, and gave her ordinary paper and a lead pencil. She drew with an untrained hand all sorts of crooked marks, looking up eagerly from the board to see whether what she was scrawling on the paper would actually appear. But nothing came. Then she threw the pencil down, exclaiming impatiently: "If I can't make anything real, it isn't worth while. You must teach me your art, and nothing else."

The artist looked at her gravely, and replied: "Art cannot be learned in a day. People must work long and patiently."

"Even a Sunday child?"

"Even a Sunday child. A person who is not cannot learn it at all. You must begin at the beginning, as we have all done. You must not open the paint-box until you know how to use the pencil perfectly. Just think, child, if I should allow you to paint before you were able to draw faultlessly, and you should make a monster, when the unfortunate creature stood alive before you,

crooked, misshapen, and crippled, what would you say then?"

"I should be very sorry," said Maxa, sadly.

"That wouldn't help the poor cripple. So you are strictly forbidden to touch the paint-box until you can



draw perfectly."

Maxa was a sensible child, and saw that the master was right. She drew diligently, though at first it wearied her, and soon gained a taste for it. She wanted to reach quickly the point where she could use the paint-box; but the master was strict, and nothing except what was perfectly correct, the very best, would satisfy him. Many months passed before she had made so

much progress that he said one day, "It will do now." Maxa blushed with pleasure, and asked, "May I have the paint-box?"

The artist looked at her for a while silently and thoughtfully, then he said: "Very well. We will try."

Maxa, in great delight, sprang up to bring the paintbox from the corner, but the master stopped her and beckoned. The easel stalked forward, the paint-box hopped to its side, and the negro girls brought a mahlstick, a canvas, and a new palette, and set everything in order. The little girl took the magic brush from the box, squeezed a few bits of color from the tubes upon the palette, and stepped before the canvas. Her hand trembled, her little heart beat violently, and her eyes grew dim. It was a great moment. Now, for the first time, she was to accomplish, as a real artist, the miracle of creation.

She was just touching the brush to the canvas when the artist caught her arm.

"Stop, child. No hurry. What do you want to paint?"

"A little girl," she answered firmly.

The master smiled and shook his head. "No, not yet. That is too difficult. Try something lifeless first."

"But I want to make a living creature!" cried Maxa, stamping her foot impatiently.

"No one must do that until he is perfectly sure of himself," replied the master. "Try something lifeless first."

A mischievous idea darted into the child's head. With a few swift strokes of the brush she painted in the middle of the canvas a gray cloud of smoke. Instantly a thick vapor filled the room, and the two black maids began to cough pitifully. The master laughed and quickly painted the cloud over with the ground

color, the smoke vanished as suddenly as it had come, and the artist said reprovingly: "No nonsense, child, or I shall take away the paint-box. Art is too lofty for sorry jests."

She begged forgiveness, promised to be good and sensible, and now began to work earnestly. "I'll paint a doll," she said, and the master consented. Oh, wonder! The Alsatian peasant girl, with the big butterfly bow on her fair hair, which she began to paint, grew before her on the floor of the studio, just as it did under her brush. When she saw the doll's head and body lying there, she wanted to throw down the painting implements and rush to it, to convince herself by feeling that it was real. Again the artist sternly reproved her.

"Keep on, you restless butterfly. What has been begun must be finished. First complete the doll, then you can play with her."

Maxa added the arms and legs, but she did it rather carelessly, and they were incomplete. She would not take the time to paint shoes and stockings, so the poor Alsatian remained barefooted. The master shook his head, but did not prevent her running to the doll and lifting it tenderly in her arms. Maxa would not notice that the limbs were strangely crooked and pitifully thin, and it was by no means as pretty as the six dolls which the artist had made for her. She liked it better, because she had created it herself.

The artist let her play with the work of her hands, locked away the brush and palette, sent the paint-box back to its corner, and said: "Now you know how an artist feels when he has created something. Whoever has done it once will do it again. But I forbid you to touch the paint-box in my absence. You can use it only when I am here."

Maxa came to the studio even more eagerly every day, and was happy when permitted to paint with the magic pencil. She never grew tired of filling the room with the works of her imagination. First, she made toys of every description; then vases, china figures, and bronze busts; then she ventured upon foliage, plants, and flowers; and finally even on all sorts of flying and creeping things, gay caterpillars, ladybugs, little beetles, and butterflies of the most magnificent colors; and when the beetles ran over the leaves, and the butterflies were hovering in the air, she exclaimed: "See what I can do! Now I want to paint some living people."

"Not yet," said the master. "Beware of pride; it is the greatest foe of the artist."

Maxa would not understand, and begged and coaxed him to let her paint human beings. But he would not permit it. This vexed her, and she thought: "Just wait! I'll give him a surprise." She watched in the garden until the master went out, slipped into the studio, and seized the paint-box. The negro girls hastily placed themselves in front of it, warning her by gestures not to

disobey the master's command; but Maxa cried, "Begone, you black creatures, or I'll paint a dog that will bite you." Then the mute maid-servants drew back in terror, while Maxa opened the paint-box, placed a large new canvas on the easel, thought for a moment, and then resolutely began to paint a young girl.

She had long been planning what she desired to make—just the girl she wished to be herself, tall and beautiful, with loose golden hair and shining gray eyes, in a pink dress with a long train.

The first strokes of the brush she made boldly, without hesitation. She began with the head, and was completely absorbed in the work. But when it was successfully finished and looked out at her from the canvas with shining gray eyes, she could not refrain from glancing into the studio beside the easel to see what was being done. Her eyes instantly met two sparkling gray ones, gazing at her with an unspeakably loving, longing expression.

This look was an electric shock, and confused her so that she did not venture to glance there again, but hastily painted on. But she no longer had her former sure touch. Now she had seen it: what her brush painted became actual life, and every stroke was part of a living creature — if it failed, the creature was injured. Maxa's hand trembled, and she felt inclined to throw down the brush. But dared she do that? She could not leave unfinished what she had commenced — how

terrible it would be to have half a human being lying in the studio! She trembled with fear at the bare thought, and painted on hurriedly. The master might come back at any moment. Only let her finish — quick — quick —

But alas! Nothing perfect can be accomplished by over haste. The young girl's body would not succeed like the head. It was crooked and misshapen, the shoulders were uneven, and the folds of the pink dress with the long train showed that the material covered very ill-formed limbs. Maxa perceived, with increasing fear, that she had bungled, and she was just going to try to correct some of the most faulty lines in the sketch when the door suddenly opened and the master entered.

Maxa screamed and ran behind a curtain to hide. The artist saw at once what had happened: the picture with the beautiful head and the miserable body, the poor crippled girl in the studio, the negro maids who stood in the corner as if paralyzed by fear, and he called in a terrible voice, "Maxa, what have you done?"

Maxa came out of her hiding place, clasped her hands, and pleaded:—

"Forgive me, master, I could not help it. I had to do it."

"Look at your work, you disobedient child! All that lives for you is a monster, with a pretty face and crippled limbs."

"Make amends for what I have done," Maxa begged, beginning to cry.

"I cannot do that," said the master, sadly. "Your creation lives. It belongs to you alone. Will you destroy it, and make another?"

"No!" shrieked Maxa in horror, hurrying to the girl as if to save her from destruction. The young girl knelt before her, laid her head in her lap, and looked at her very mournfully. Maxa, being a Sunday child, was, without knowing it, a poetess, so she could give the mute girl speech, and she began to say in sorrowful tones:—

"Little mother dear, why Crooked, ugly, am I, Not pretty like you? Since thou madest me live, Why didst thou not give Joy and loveliness, too?"

Maxa hugged and kissed her, and tried to comfort her. She was not ugly, she whispered into her ear, but beautiful as the day; no one could help loving her, and she would give her the handsomest clothes and the most splendid jewels. But the young girl, shaking her head, answered:—

"Gems bright and rare,
Silk and velvet fair,
No joy bestow.
Little mother, I pray, leave me not so."

Maxa, in her distress, turned to the master, who stood

with folded arms, gazing sadly at her and the complaining girl. "Master, dear master, help me just this once. I will never be disobedient again. I cannot bear to have the creature I have made so unhappy. Help me, or kill us both." The master made no reply, but paced up and down the studio several times, absorbed in thought. Some minutes passed in this way, while Maxa followed him anxiously with her eyes. At last he stopped and said, "Your girl must remain as she is, but I will do what I can to make her happy." Going to the canvas, he began to paint. He made a young prince, handsome as the day, slender as a fir tree, with kindly eyes and smiling face, who stretched both hands toward the girl and gazed at her tenderly. And there, too, stood the young prince in reality, stretching both hands toward the girl as he did in the picture. Then the master said: "He loves you, and will marry you, and always be your faithful husband. He cannot speak, but you can talk enough for both. If you like him, give him your hand."

The young girl, blushing, rose and went slowly toward the prince. She limped slightly, but the prince did not seem to notice it. Gazing joyously into her sparkling gray eyes, which she cast down, he clasped her in his arms. The negro maids clapped their hands in delight and danced around the pair. The easel stalked along shakily, the paint-box jumped merrily, but Maxa said mournfully:—

"What good will all this do? The lover won't make the girl more beautiful."

"You don't understand," said the master. "When one loves anybody with all one's heart, one thinks her more beautiful than anything else in the whole wide world. Ask the bride what she says about it." Maxa cast a searching glance at the young girl, who nestled closely to her prince, saying with a happy smile:—

"His love is true beyond compare; Just as I am he finds me fair. His heart is now my happiness; I need not beauty life to bless."

The prince nodded and kissed his future bride.

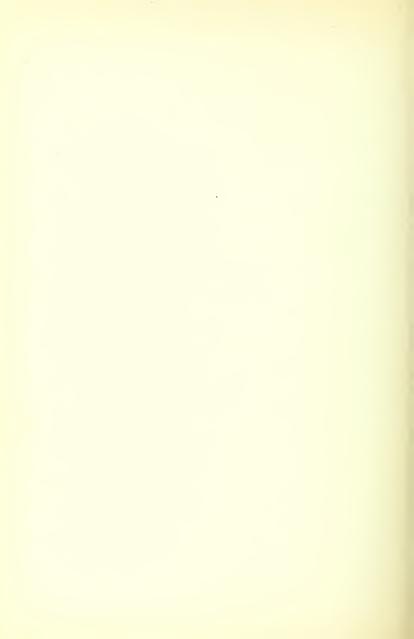
"Well, then," said Maxa, "if you are both satisfied, I will be, too, and I thank you, master, for having made everything turn out for the best."

But the artist answered: "I could help once, but never again. Let this be a lesson to you. Great power is given to the artist. But woe betide him if he uses it recklessly! Farewell. I can teach you nothing more."

Before she could speak a word, he had vanished, and with him the lovers, the black maid-servants, the easel, and the paint-box; but the studio and all its contents remained, including the picture with the prince and the girl. Whenever Maxa saw it afterward, her heart grew both sad and joyous — sad because the girl she had created had disappeared, and joyous because she felt that she must be happy with her prince. Maxa

herself grew up into a tall, beautiful girl, whom everybody recognized as a Sunday child. She continued to paint, but no longer with a magic brush, and this was well for her.

Who can be sure that his work will always succeed?
— and it is far too dangerous to make a mistake when, for each error, a living being must suffer all through life.







## THE HEART THREAD

ONCE upon a time there lived in an old palace by the sea a beautiful young queen, who was richer and more powerful than any other, far or near, in that region or across the water. She had many big ships, which brought to her from the most distant quarters of the globe valuables of every description. She possessed cities and castles, fields and flocks, and everything that the heart can desire. Her mints stamped gold from her mines, her mills ground wheat from her fields, her furnaces burned wood from her forests, the materials of her clothes were woven from silk from her silkworms and wool from her sheep, and, when she wanted to be merry, she had fools enough in her own country at whom she could laugh. Only one thing was lacking to make her happy: children, or at least one child. For, though she had been married several years, hitherto she had vainly longed for the joys of a mother.

When year after year passed away without the gift of a little one, the beautiful young queen lost her cheerfulness, and became more and more sorrowful. Her riches gave her no pleasure, she scarcely glanced at the precious things her ships brought from the most distant countries. She did not laugh at her jesters, no matter what funny things they might say. Shutting herself up in her most distant tower, she played with the dolls she had had when she was a little girl, dressed and undressed them, washed and petted them, rocked them in her arms and sang them to sleep, or ordered very young babies to be brought, treated them in the same loving way, and covered them with kisses and tears before she allowed them to be carried back to their mothers.

The queen no longer had her mother, but she had her nurse, a good and wise woman. One day she asked her, "Tell me, nurse, does the stork never come into my country?"

"Oh, yes, my beautiful queen," replied the nurse; "he probably comes every day and every night."

"But why doesn't he enter my palace?"

"That I do not know, my beloved queen, old as I am."

"Don't you think that I could have him caught as he is flying past the palace?"

The nurse shook her head doubtfully. "I wouldn't advise that. If the stork is frightened, I have heard, he drops the child from his beak, and the baby's little limbs are broken, and it is found dead. Then you will have nothing, and the mother who is expecting it will have no baby either."

The queen could say nothing in answer to this. Yet she could not give up the thought of snatching a child from the stork, if he did not bring her one voluntarily. She commanded her hunters to climb every night with nets to the roofs of the houses and the tops of the steeples, to the summits of the mountains and the branches of the trees, and seize a stork carrying a child if he flew past within reach of their arms. But they



were strictly ordered not to frighten or injure the bird, and, above all, to take care that the child was not hurt.

The hunters obeyed the queen's orders, and, night after night, went to their stations in the tree-tops, on the mountain peaks, towers, and roofs. They saw, by the light of the moon and stars, plenty of storks flying by with babies in their beaks, but they did not come near enough to have the nets thrown over them,

and the hunters were obliged to leave their lofty posts with empty hands. The queen was very much displeased with them for their lack of skill, but the storks, too, were very angry. They complained to the fairy of the children, that they could not go their way through the kingdom of the beautiful young queen unmolested, but were startled by sudden shouts and throwing of nets, so that they almost dropped the children intrusted to them. Besides, these malicious attacks disturbed the children, who sometimes began to cry, and they ought not to open their little mouths in the chill night air; they might get sick.

The fairy of the children listened to the grievances of her messenger birds with a frown, and determined to go to the bottom of the mischief. She went with the storks, who set out after sunset, and, as soon as she had crossed the frontiers of the beautiful young queen's kingdom, she saw at once, on the first wooded mountains, in the tops of the tallest trees, a large number of hunters, with nets in their hands, watching for the storks. Flying as swiftly as an eagle to one of them, she grasped him by both shoulders, crying in a terrible voice, "Man! why don't you let my storks alone?"

The hunter jumped so that he would certainly have fallen from the tree if the fairy had not held him. So he only dropped his net, and answered trembling, "Because I was ordered to do it."

In reply to other questions, the fairy of the children

was told that the hunters were acting by the commands of their queen, and that their mistress was angry with them when, after watching vainly all night long, they appeared at the palace in the morning without stork or child.

The fairy of the children ordered the frightened hunter to leave his post immediately, go home, and tell all his companions to let the storks alone in the future if they valued their lives. He obeyed, but the next morning, instead of the expected hunters, the fairy of the children came to the palace, entered the young queen's room, and, without a word of greeting, said in a harsh voice, with a stern face, "What does it mean that you have commanded your huntsmen to catch the storks as they fly past carrying children?"

The queen looked in astonishment at the tall stranger in the blue robe, with the sparkling eyes and the little white lace cap on her gray hair, and answered with dignity: "You evidently do not know to whom you are speaking. Or you would not dare—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted the fairy of the children; "these high and mighty airs are out of place with me. I know very well that you are the queen of this kingdom, but no sovereign is of any account in my presence. I hold the most sacred office. The future of the human race is confided to me. I watch over the rising generation. I am the fairy of the children, who sends the storks to the mothers, and I forbid you—"

The fairy of the children could say no more. Scarcely had the queen heard who stood before her when, forgetting all pride, she threw herself at the fairy's feet, clasped her knees, and pleaded, "Dear, good fairy of the children, give me a little child."

The fairy looked at her thoughtfully a short time, then raised her kindly, saying in a far more gentle voice, "No, dear queen; I cannot grant your request."

"But why not, dear fairy? Why should a happiness which the humblest mother among my subjects may enjoy be denied to me?"

"Children bestow not only happiness, but sorrow, too, dear queen."

"I will gladly take the sorrow into the bargain, dear fairy."

"You don't know what you wish to undertake, good little queen. A child falls ill easily and often, then the mother watches in terrible anxiety through nights of pain beside its little bed. A child often dies very young, and then the mother will never again enjoy her life. And, even if the child grows up, it finally marries and leaves the mother alone in her old age."

"All this does not frighten me, dear fairy. Only give me a little child, I beseech you from my heart. I will nurse it if it is sick; I will not survive it if it dies; I will rejoice in its happiness if it marries; but give me a little child, dear fairy of the children."

The fairy reflected a little while. "Wait," she said,



"Forgetting all pride, she threw herself at the fairy's feet."



"I will see if I can do anything for you." Going very close to the queen, she looked at her sharply, murmuring: "Why! she really has the heart thread. I have not often found it in queens."

"What is the heart thread?" asked the queen, very curiously and rather anxiously.

"Have you never seen it?" replied the fairy of the children.

"No," said the queen. "I don't know what you mean."

Then the fairy grasped something and held it before the queen's eyes, and the queen saw with surprise a long thread, as fine as the finest cobweb, which looked as if it had been spun from gold. Seizing it, she pulled it somewhat hastily, and felt a sudden pain in her heart, so that she uttered a little scream. She now perceived that the thread grew from her bosom, and she asked the fairy of the children if she had had it long.

"You have always had it," answered the fairy of the children; "but you did not notice it, and therefore did not see it. I will now send you a child, which will have a heart thread, too. Fasten it to yours, then nothing and no one can part you."

The queen began to weep for joy, but, before she could express her gratitude, the fairy of the children had flown out of the window and was floating through the air like a blue cloud. The queen called her nurse, and told her joyously that the stork was going to come

to her. Instantly there were great preparations in the palace; forty skilful seamstresses sewed on the child's clothing, twelve jewellers made a cradle of gold, silver, and gems, a young nurse was summoned from the mountains, and, when all was ready and in order, they waited eagerly.

They did not wait long. The evening after the nurse reached the palace, a clattering was heard at the tower window. They hurried to open it and a big stork dropped a little child into the nurse's arms, and flew off like an arrow. The nurse ran with the baby into the chamber of the queen, who, with a cry of joy, clasped it in her arms and covered it with kisses. The child was a wonderfully beautiful little girl, white and rosy, with round limbs, golden hair, and blue eyes. The queen looked at it quickly. Yes, from the little bosom grew a marvellously fine thread like gold, which seemed so delicate that a breath must tear it; but it was so strong that the queen could not separate the tiniest end, either with all the strength of her hands or with the scissors. Unnoticed by her women, she knotted the child's heart thread to her own, and felt a gentle warmth streaming from the little heart into hers, which filled her with delight.

From that time the beautiful young queen was always with her little girl, whom she named Hilda. At first the two knotted heart strings were so short that the mother could scarcely go a few arms' lengths from her

child. Hilda was obliged to follow the queen wherever she went, and if the nurse, who carried the child, did not move quickly enough, it pulled so painfully at her heart that she stopped with a scream. But as the child grew larger, the heart thread lengthened too. When Hilda began to run, it had become long enough for her to trot and creep through all the halls in the palace, without disturbing the queen; and when she was two years old, it reached from the farthest end of the palace park, so that Hilda could frolic on the grass without hurting her mother; and when she had gained her fifteenth year, the length of the heart thread allowed her to drive three hours in a carriage drawn by spirited horses, without pulling the hearts of the mother and child. But Hilda did not exceed this distance, for if the heart thread grew tight, it hurt her little heart, and she impetuously insisted on being taken back to her mother.

Hilda grew finely, the heart thread constantly lengthened, the mother and child were one, and yet independent of each other, when one day it happened that the queen was sitting in her tower chamber, while Hilda and her nurse were walking on the seashore. Suddenly the queen felt a pain in her heart such as she had not had for a long, long time. Shrieking, she rushed out on the balcony, to look for her child; for from there she could get a view of the whole palace park, the shore, and the sea. She instantly discovered the nurse, who was running up and down the beach screaming and wringing her hands, and saw on the sea a ship moving swiftly away with all her sails spread. The queen knew, by the way the ship was built, that she was a pirate craft. Pirates had come, seized the Princess Hilda, and were now carrying her to their distant country.

The queen called despairingly for her admirals, sailors, and soldiers. When they came hurrying in the greatest consternation, she commanded them to put to sea at once with the strongest warship in her navy. The hasty preparations did not occupy much time, it is true; but when the vessel weighed anchor, the pirates were no longer in sight. The queen had sailed too. She stood beside the helmsman, and as she felt distinctly and painfully where the pull at her heart was, she could tell him the exact direction in which to steer the ship.

The queen's man-of-war was larger, stronger, and swifter than the pirate craft. After a chase of two hours, the pursued vessel hove in sight. The queen urged her men to set every sail, her ship cut swiftly through the water, the distance between the two constantly lessened, the pull at the queen's heart diminished, her pain ceased, and she soon came so near the pirate vessel that she could see Hilda, guarded by two pirates, sitting on the forward deck, weeping.

"Yield!" the queen commanded her captain to shout through the speaking trumpet to the pirate, "yield, and we will show you mercy." But the pirates only laughed scornfully, and sailed on as fast as they could, to escape their pursuers. But the queen's ship came nearer and nearer, and already they could calculate how soon they would be overtaken.

When the gueen's man-of-war was within a few cable lengths of the pirates, they seized the Princess Hilda and threw her overboard. The queen's people uttered a cry of horror. Only the queen herself remained calm. She stood erect beside the railing of the ship, moving her arms and hands, as if she was drawing something invisible. The sailors thought that the queen was practising some magic; for they did not see what she was pulling. But she drew quickly and strongly on the heart thread, and the Princess Hilda followed it and soon reached the side of the ship, where the sailors could fish her out of the water and place her in her mother's arms. The pursuit of the pirates was continued with double zeal, the pirate craft was soon overtaken and sunk in the sea with all on board, so that from that time the shore of the queen's kingdom was safe from their attacks.

When the queen returned to her palace with her rescued child, she ordered a great banquet to be prepared for her admirals, soldiers, and sailors. But the fright, excitement, and plunge into the cold sea had made Princess Hilda ill, so that she had to go to bed. Her mother remained by her side to nurse her. During the night she fell asleep from weariness, and then Death

came stealing softly in to take Hilda. He was already stretching his bony arms toward the little girl when he saw the heart thread which went from her to her mother, and shone like dull gold in the light of the night lamp. He hesitated, cautiously grasped the thread, and tried to break it in two. But it resisted, and Death accomplished nothing by his struggle except to wake the mother and child, and be seen by them.

Princess Hilda hid her head under the bedelothes, but the queen seized her heavy gold sceptre, which stood in the corner, and struck Death with all her might, screaming, "Begone, monster, begone!"

Death was ordered to bring only Hilda, not the queen. As he could not get one without the other, he was obliged to be off with his errand unfinished. Tearing himself away from the queen's blows, which almost broke his rattling bones, he vanished in the darkness. Hilda recovered and continued to grow until she became a beautiful, tall young lady, and the queen's old nurse said that the princess ought to marry. But the queen would not hear of it, saying impatiently, "There is plenty of time, nurse, there is plenty of time."

It happened, however, that a prince from a neighboring country came to visit the palace, saw Hilda, and, dazzled by her beauty, exclaimed, "This lovely princess must become my wife; she or no one." He pleased Hilda, too, and when he asked her if she would make

him happy by giving him her hand, she answered, "Yes."

The young pair went to the queen and begged for her consent to the marriage, but the queen said, "No, it cannot be."

"Why not?" asked Hilda, bursting into tears.

Her mother clasped her in her arms, kissed her tenderly, and answered gently: "Don't ask why; only believe me, it cannot be. Stay quietly with me. Nowhere can you be happier than with your mother."

But Hilda did not see this, and when the prince urged her to fly with him to his kingdom and marry him there, she allowed herself to be persuaded, mounted his horse at nightfall, and dashed away with him. For several hours they rode at full gallop, without Hilda's repenting her disobedience. But long as the heart thread was, it was not endless, and toward midnight, when she had almost reached the frontiers of her mother's kingdom, it grew tight, and would stretch no farther. Hilda felt a violent pull at her heart, and began to suffer intense pain. Yet her love for the prince was so strong that she bravely bore her torture and rode on with him, though at every step of the horse she suffered cruelly.

But the queen in her castle also felt the pulling of the heart thread, and knew by it that her child had fled. So, in the midst of the dark night, she prepared for pursuit as quickly as possible; she could not bear the pain in her breast. She rode like the wild huntsman, she rode like the wind, she rode like the lightning, and in the gray dawn of morning she reached the pair, who could not go forward as quickly, because it was hard for the horse to carry two. "Stop, stop!" called the queen, and when she had overtaken the fugitives she said reproachfully: "Hilda, you have left your mother. Your mother could never have brought herself to desert you."

"It is the way of the world," replied the prince; "we were sure that you would forgive us, your Majesty."

Hilda dismounted from the horse, hid her face on her mother's bosom, and said softly: "My heart gave me great pain, and drew me violently back to you. But I cannot leave the prince."

The queen embraced her and answered tenderly: "We two must not part. You will not wish me to leave my kingdom and follow you into a foreign land. Turn back, both of you. You shall marry the prince, and after my death he shall become monarch of my kingdom."

Then the prince and Hilda joyously embraced each other and kissed the good queen's hand, and they all went back, and the inhabitants of the country crowded around their carriage, rejoicing. When they were again in the palace, festivals were held for the court, the servants, and the subjects, which lasted three weeks; then Hilda and the prince were married, and when Princess Hilda stood at the altar in her bridal veil, she threw her

arms around her mother's neck and whispered in her ear, "Though I have a husband, I will never, never leave you."

And she never did leave the queen, who always loved her just as dearly as when she was a little child in her arms. The heart thread remained so fine that no one except the queen could see it; it was so long that Princess Hilda never felt it when she was in the kingdom; but if she travelled in foreign countries, her mother always went with her, so that the heart thread was never pulled.

Years passed away, the queen grew older and older, till at last she was so aged that life became a burden. Now she herself called Death, whom she had once driven away, and when he appeared before her somewhat timidly, said to him: "Friend Death, you can take me now. I am ready."

"But the heart thread?" Death objected. "I cannot tear it, and I have no instructions to take the princess with me."

Then the weary queen thought of again appealing to the fairy of the children, who had so kindly aided her a long, long time ago. She went up on the tower of her palace after sunset, and when the storks carrying the children began to fly past, she called one and begged him to tell the fairy of the children that the queen earnestly desired to speak to her.

The stork delivered the message on his return home,

and the next day the fairy of the children appeared before the queen. The fairy had not changed at all. She still had the same tall figure, sparkling eyes, and gray hair, was robed in blue, with a little white lace cap on her noble head; but the queen was no longer the beautiful young woman of former days, but a shrivelled old dame, with dull eyes and snow-white hair. The fairy gazed compassionately at her a little while, then she stroked her white head and wrinkled cheeks, asking gently, "What do you want of me, dear child?"

"Dear fairy of the children," pleaded the queen in a faint voice, "the heart thread has lasted well, but now it is time to break it. You alone can do it. Please part it, that Death may lead me to rest. For I am tired."

"My child," replied the fairy of the children, "the heart thread no one can unbind, I no better than Death. But you need have no anxiety on that account. Go trustfully to rest, and rely on me. Your child shall have no discomfort from it."

"I do trust you," said the queen, kissing the kind hand of the fairy of the children. The fairy pressed a kiss upon her forehead, nodded, and vanished from her sight.

About midnight Death appeared again, and said curtly: "It is all arranged. You can come with me." In the morning the queen was found dead in her bed. The Princess Hilda, who was now queen, grieved very deeply, but was gradually comforted, as children always are when they lose their parents. Yet from that time she

could never resolve to leave her kingdom, for if she crossed the frontiers, her heart began to ache strangely and drew her back to her mother's marble tomb, which she visited daily. And when she, too, grew very old, and at last died, she was buried in the same grave beside her mother, and the gold heart thread, unseen by human beings, extended forever from the heart of the dead mother to the heart of the dead daughter.







## THE SECRET EMPIRE

Early one morning, after a stormy night, the workmen in a great seaport found a little girl upon the shore. She was lying with nothing on but a little shirt, dripping wet upon the sands, and gave no sign of life. At some distance from the beach they saw the top of a mast rising from the water. A large ship had gone down with all on board, and the waves had brought to land only this one little girl.

A compassionate laborer took her up, wrapped her in his cotton blouse and carried her quickly to the neighboring office of a tidewaiter, where her wet shirt was removed. She was laid on a bench and covered up. As soon as she grew warm, she opened her eyes, and began to cry.

Everybody in the office admired the child's delicate form, beautiful little rosy face, big blue eyes, and fair silken curls. The little shirt was made of the finest cambric, and embroidered with a gold coronet. Even without this mark it was evident that the child cast by the shipwreck on a foreign shore was of aristocratic birth, and had been carefully tended.

When the baby cried, the men standing around were

very sorry, but they did not know what to do, for they did not understand how to take care of little children; and, besides, they did not have on hand what was necessary to satisfy its wants. The child had not yet cut all its teeth, and could only stammer a few words in an unknown tongue.

The men consulted together, and soon agreed that the baby must be hungry and need, first of all, food and clothes. There was nothing in the office except some horrible brandy. But close by there was a sailors' tavern, where they could get some milk and biscuits, which the little girl ate readily. When she had had some food, she stopped crying and fell asleep.

The tidewaiter was obliged to attend to his duties and could not stay with the child. The kind laborer who had carried her into the office also had to work, for he was a poor man, and if he lost a day's work, he and his family would have nothing to eat the next day. Yet he could not make up his mind to leave the lovely little girl. Rolling up the wet shirt, he put it carefully in his big blue calico handkerchief, and slipped it into the wide pocket of his trousers. Then he again wrapped the poor, naked little creature in his blouse and in a woollen blanket, which the tidewaiter lent him, and went home with his precious burden in his shirt sleeves, though he did not consider it quite the proper thing for a respectable workingman and the father of a family.

"Hitherto you have given me children," he said to

his wife, as he placed the little one in her hands, "now I will give you one."

The woman gazed at the present with astonishment and no special pleasure; she thought that her own five children were enough. But when her husband told her how he had found the little girl, her mother heart was touched with pity and she said: "Where five are fed, a sixth can eat too. We will keep the little one, if no one claims her."

So the little girl was adopted into the workman's family, and the next Sunday he went to report it. The magistrate pondered over the name that should be given to the stranger child. A gale from the north had driven her ship on the shore. It had probably come from the north. Yet the child might have been born in the south. So he called her by a name half Greek, which is a southern, and half Danish, which is a northern language, Margarita Bölgebarn, that is, Pearl, the child of the waves, and urged her foster-father to take great care of the little shirt, with the tiny embroidered gold crown, in which she was found, as with its help perhaps the child's relatives might some day be discovered.

Many ships had been wrecked during that stormy night, and it was never known which one had carried the child. No one appeared to claim it, so it remained with the workman and grew up with his children. Rita—as they called Margarita to shorten her name—grew finely, although she did not fare well with him. It was

very hard for the man to support himself and his family. They were often on short commons, and when there was not enough to eat for all, Rita had to wait until the others left something for her, and frequently went without entirely. Her foster-mother was not a bad woman, but poverty had made her hard, and her own flesh and blood came nearer to her than the foundling whom she had adopted. She did not grudge her a little place in the miserable home, but she was not allowed to cost anything; for the father's scanty earnings did not permit it.

Rita slept in the same bed with the two youngest children, who pulled the scanty coverlets over them and left Rita half uncovered, so that in the winter nights she was bitterly cold, and nestled closely to her fostersisters to get some warmth from their bodies. She turned over often, because this was the only way she could warm her right and left side in turn; but this disturbed her bed-fellows, and they cuffed and kicked her. She bore it, and only wept secretly, because it was still dark, and no one could see her. She was dressed in the clothes of her foster-sisters, after they could not or would not wear them any longer. So she usually went barefoot, and wore shabby, patched, shapeless garments. But though she looked like a scarccrow, every one who saw her noticed her remarkable beauty. Her little bare feet, though sunburnt and soiled by the mud of the streets, were as exquisite in form as if chiselled

by the hand of a skilful sculptor; her face was fair, rosy, and lovely; her large blue eyes were soft and dreamy, and her silken curls, carelessly as they were arranged, seemed like sunbeams playing around her beautiful head. Wherever she went, people stood still in the streets and looked after her. They thought she must be some aristocratic girl, who, for a whim, had disguised herself as a beggar child.

This did not escape the notice of her foster-sisters, and they envied her for her beauty, and because she attracted attention wherever she appeared. They made her feel more and more plainly that she was a foundling living on their charity. Everybody vied in giving her orders, and required her to obey them. Everybody made her serve as a maid-servant waits upon strict employers. She had to sweep the rooms, and once a week scrub and polish the floor. She had to light the fire in the kitchen every morning, and every evening, until late at night, clean the shoes of her foster-parents, her four fostersisters, and even her foster-brother. She was obliged to do all the errands, and if there was no money in the house, let herself be scolded because she did not pay the debts and beg them to let her have still more on credit. She was so scantily dressed that the neighbors took pity on her and gave her all sorts of things, some shoes, another a skirt, a third a waist, a fourth a shawl, each one what she had and could spare. She went hungry, too, and when they saw it, people secretly gave her in

the houses, the shops, and at school, a bit of bread and end of sausage, an apple, or a piece of Dutch cheese. As she was always gentle and kind, never spoke in a loud voice, never quarrelled, never uttered an improper or a coarse word, her foster-sisters jeered at her and scornfully called her the princess. For they all knew that she was found in a fine little shirt with a small gold crown embroidered on it; they had seen the pretty garment themselves, though their father kept it carefully wrapped in paper in a drawer, and did not often bring it out to show any one, and when they thought that perhaps Rita really was a royal child, they were provoked, yet at the same time it gave them a spiteful pleasure to have a princess subject to the children of a plain workman, and obliged to do the most menial tasks for them.

From the time Rita was old enough to understand her position, she, too, thought constantly about her origin, and busied herself waking and sleeping about the secret of the little gold crown embroidered on her shirt. She had an eager longing to see and touch the dainty linen; but she did not dare to ask, for once, when she did so, her foster-father roughly refused, saying harshly, "Don't think about it; it would only fill your head with silly notions."

She had gradually learned where she had been found, and often went to the shore, sat down on the sand, and gazed out over the sea to the spot where the ship which had brought her here had sunk, and where perhaps her parents were resting at the bottom of the water. Then deep sorrow overwhelmed her, and tears filled her eyes. She felt as if she must plunge into the waves, go down into the depths to her own kindred, and never return to her poverty and toil. She did not long for wealth and



splendor, only for a mother's love. How wonderfully delightful it must be to be embraced by a mother's arms, allowed to kiss and caress her, and know that she was her own little girl! This joy she had never known, and she envied her foster-sisters who, in other ways, had so little for which to be envied.

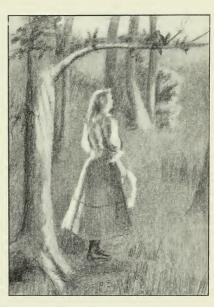
When she was fourteen years old she had to begin

to earn something. At first she sewed jute coffee-bags, but after a few days the superintendent herself said to her, "Rita, this labor is too coarse for you, you can do something better," and without consulting her foster-family she sent her to a milliner, where Rita liked her work very much, for there she had to make, of fine straw or lace, pretty hats for women, with velvet and silk, ribbons, flowers, and feathers, which she had much natural taste in arranging. They tried the hats on her for customers to see, and as everything was becoming, and the most expensive the most so, the ladies bought them very readily. She soon received good wages, which she took home honestly to her foster-mother, who in return treated her somewhat more kindly.

Rita was reserved and always liked to be alone. Her foster-sisters and her companions in the workroom thought this was pride, and resented it. She was only absorbed in her own thoughts, because her mind was constantly dwelling upon the little gold crown, the ship at the bottom of the sea, and those who were drowned in it. On Sundays and holidays she either stayed in a corner of the room, dreaming, or went to walk alone, usually on the shore, but often, too, in a little wood not far from the city. The other members of the family did not trouble themselves, but took their pleasure without her, and this suited her exactly.

One Sunday, soon after Easter, she again went into the wood to enjoy the early spring. A short time after leaving the road and passing under the trees, she saw a squirrel playing merrily in the top of a tree, jumping from branch to branch, peeping at her with its bright eyes, and then leaping to the next tree. Rita followed, that she might enjoy his graceful sport longer. The

little creature sprang on before her, Rita pursued, and without knowing it, still led by the squirrel, reached the middle of the wood, a place where the trees grew very close together, which she had not yet seen. Suddenly she no longer saw the squirrel, and searched everywhere for him with her eves, unable to imagine where he could



be. While turning her head in every direction, she saw at the foot of a large beech a hole, half hidden by moss and large ferns. Rita cautiously approached to peep in, when the treacherous covering of plants gave way under her feet, and with a cry she slipped down the opening. She closed her eyes and thought this would

be the end of her. She fell a long, long distance, till it seemed as if she was resting on a warm bosom, and clasped by loving arms. Rita opened her eyes, and what she saw astonished her so greatly that she thought she must be dreaming.

She was standing on the threshold of a lofty, spacious hall, more magnificent than anything she had ever seen or believed possible. The walls were covered with white silk tapestry, countless chandeliers filled the whole space with brilliant light, and she did not know which to admire first: the huge mirrors, the gilded chairs with white silk seats, the tables with mosaic tops inlaid with gems, or the throng of people in glittering uniforms and magnificent costumes who filled the hall. Rita had no time to inspect all this splendor. By her side stood a tall lady with a very proud bearing and a wonderfully beautiful face, dressed in a white silk gown, embroidered with silver threads, and a veil fastened with a diadem on her golden hair, which fell over her back to the edge of her skirt. This lady had caught Rita in her arms when she fell into the depths. She bent the knee before her three times in low curtseys, bowed her head, then rose, took Rita by the hand, and led her into the hall.

At the moment she crossed the threshold, solemn music sounded, an officer of gigantic height uttered a command, halberds were dropped with a loud noise on the polished floor, and between two ranks of tall soldiers of the guards in splendid uniforms, who stood like walls,



" Welcome to your kingdom, royal mistress."



Rita walked slowly with her companion through the whole length of the hall to a golden throne at the end, which stood on a platform covered with cloth of gold beneath a purple canopy. The white-robed lady, by a wave of her hand, invited Rita to ascend the three steps of the platform and seat herself upon the throne. When the young girl had taken her place, the music ceased, the lady lifted from a small table, which stood beside the throne, a silk dress, embroidered with silver, which she put on Rita, a blue velvet mantle, lined with ermine, which she threw over her shoulders, and a crown of gold and diamonds the size of a pigeon's egg, which she set on her head. Then, again bending the knee before her, she said in a voice which sounded like a silver bell, "Welcome to your kingdom, royal mistress."

She moved aside, and now ladies in rich court dresses, with long trains and brilliant jewels, and gentlemen in uniforms covered with gold lace, wearing swords by their sides and orders on their breasts, approached and paid homage to Rita. The ladies kissed her hand, the gentlemen pressed their lips to the edge of her ermine mantle. About a hundred or more ladies and gentlemen greeted Rita in this submissive manner."

For a long time Rita did not dare to open her lips. At last, when the courtiers had paid their homage, she turned to the white-robed lady standing beside the throne and asked timidly: "Where am I? What does all this mean?"

"You are in your kingdom, royal mistress," replied the lady, "and your loyal subjects are happy to be permitted to offer you their homage."

"I don't understand," answered Rita, bewildered; "you are mistaken. I am only a poor milliner—"

"Not so, royal mistress," said the lady; "whatever you may be considered in a foreign country does not matter. Here you are our illustrious young empress, and at heart you know it perfectly well, and have always known it."

"Then the little gold crown on my shirt—"

"Is the sign of your rank, royal mistress."

"But explain to me — what does it all mean — who are you?"

The lady made a sign, the guards with clanking steps drew back to the walls of the hall, the courtiers formed a wide semicircle around the room, the ladies in the front row, the gentlemen behind them, and in the midst of a deep silence she began:—

"Royal mistress, I am the White Lady, the attendant fairy of your illustrious family, whose duty it is to watch over all who are of your royal blood. Do not believe that I have neglected this duty. But foes who are more powerful than I have prevented me from performing it as I ought and wished to do. Know that you are the daughter of the emperor and empress of Thule, and their lawful heiress. Here are the portraits of your noble parents. They welcome from their frames their lovely descendant."

The White Lady pointed with outstretched hand to the wall behind the throne. Rita turned eagerly and saw at the right and left of the purple canopy the life-size portraits of a handsome man in crown and imperial mantle, and a woman who looked like a being from the heavenly world. At the sight she began to weep bitterly, and the whole court sobbed with her. The White Lady waited until she was calm again and then went on:—

"For ten long years your father had reigned gloriously in Thule, like his father, his grandfather, and thirty-three ancestors before them for a thousand years. Then one day the King of the Pole, without any cause, declared war against him and with his army of ugly dwarfs invaded Thule. The Pole King is a great magician, who reigns over the polar bears and the whales, and when he chooses can produce such cold that the air freezes and sends thunderbolts from the northern lights, which kill every living creature. Our regiments could not withstand his thunderbolts and polar bears, our ships could not resist his cold and his whales. He conquered Thule, and your parents could do nothing except fly with you, royal mistress, and their court on their last ship. But even on the sea the wicked wizard pursued them, he conjured up a terrible storm which struck them here, drove their ship on the shore, and wrecked it. The waves swallowed all on board, I was permitted by the higher

powers to save only you, royal mistress. This is the sorrowful history of your illustrious family."

She was silent, and Rita, too, remained silent a long time, for she was much excited by all she heard and saw. After some time she calmed herself and asked: "What is to be done now? Will you not take me back to my kingdom of Thule?"

"Alas!" replied the White Lady, "that is not possible. Between here and your kingdom lie three seas and four broad countries, with soldiers and fortresses on their frontiers, besides five ice mountains, six burning deserts, and seven raging rivers. And even if we crossed all these obstacles on the way to Thule, we should find there the King of the Pole, who would do you some harm."

"Then must I stay here always?" asked Rita, anxiously.

The White Lady sighed, and the whole court did the same.

Rita did not know what time it was, but she must have been a long while in the throne room, for she began to feel hungry. At first she was ashamed to ask for anything; but when the gnawing in her stomach grew greater, she thought, "I am empress, and have a right to command." So she said: "Dear fairy, could not I have something to eat? I am very hungry."

"Royal mistress," replied the White Lady, sadly, "we have nothing here."

"Not even a bit of bread?"

"Not even a bit of bread. Your courtiers and your guard need no food, nor your attendant fairy either."

"Then I must starve to death if I stay here."

The White Lady lowered her eyes, as if ashamed, and remained silent.

"If this is so," said Rita, sadly, "I suppose I must leave you."

As she received no answer, she rose from the throne and slowly descended the steps of the platform. As her foot touched the polished floor, trumpets blared, shouts of command were heard, the guard marched from the sides of the hall to the centre, dropped their halberds with a thundering sound, and formed two motionless ranks, the music again struck up the solemn imperial march, the White Lady clasped Rita by the hand, court-marshals with white wands walked before them, court ladies with long trains followed, and thus the magnificent procession moved toward the entrance. Here all paused as if spellbound; the White Lady let Rita's hand fall and made three low curtseys before her.

"Will you all take leave of me?" asked Rita, anxiously.

"We must," replied the White Lady.

"What! Will no one go with me? Must I return to my foster-parents all alone?"

"Unfortunately we cannot change things," answered the White Lady, sorrowfully.

Rita sighed heavily, embraced the White Lady, who kissed her hair again and again, while the ladies and gentlemen of the court, kneeling around her, pressed their lips to the border of her mantle, and said, "Then farewell to you all." Tears streamed from her eyes, and she was preparing to pass through the door, which two court-marshals held open before her. At that moment the White Lady said gently, "Pardon me, your Majesty," and lifted the diamond crown from her head. Rita stopped in astonishment, when she also unfastened the clasp of the ermine-lined blue velvet mantle and removed it from her shoulders.

"You will not even leave me the signs of my rank?" cried Rita.

"It is the order, and we must obey," replied the White Lady, removing also the wonderful gown of white silk and silver, so that Rita again stood in the plain Sunday clothes of a poor milliner.

"So the magnificence is all at an end," lamented Rita. "I am no longer an empress, but the foundling, Margarita Bölgebarn."

"Not so, your Majesty," answered the White Lady, quickly. "Empress you are, and empress you will remain; no one can rob you of your royal rank. True, you will live among the people of this country unrecognized; but whenever you choose to come here among your faithful subjects, all the honors due your rank will be shown you, and your own eyes will con-

vince you that you are our beloved and revered sovereign."

Rita still lingered at the door. It seemed to her very hard to leave the brilliantly lighted hall; but she had no choice. Unless she wanted to starve, she must go. So, summoning all her resolution, she crossed the threshold. At the same moment an invisible power seized her like a whirlwind and bore her up with the speed of an arrow. A moment later she was standing under the sunset sky at the edge of the hole at the foot of the great beech tree, and saw on one of its lowest branches the squirrel, which again hopped merrily from tree to tree before her, and led her out of the wood.

It was already dark when she reached home. Though usually they did not trouble themselves much about her, this time they had been anxious, and her fostermother asked her harshly where she had been roving about so long. Rita excused her absence with gentle words. She thought of her royal rank, and could not help secretly smiling at the poor woman, who, in her ignorance, treated her so rudely. She remembered her throne room, her courtiers, her body-guard, her diamond crown, and found it amusing that she was obliged to sit in a poor workman's room at a table without a cloth, to a scanty meal of cold sauer-kraut, with peas, black bread, and water, and then go to rest on a straw bed, which she now had for herself, since she richly earned it.

After the secret of her birth and rank had been revealed to her, a change took place in her which even the dull people who surrounded her could not fail to notice. She was even more quiet and reserved than before, yet kind and cordial to every one in a way that her foster-family had never seen among the people of her class. At first her unvarying graciousness vexed her uneducated companions; for they considered it affectation, and answered Rita's pleasant words scornfully or roughly. But as this did not disturb her, and her manner remained equally gentle and kind, the others were gradually impressed by it and began to regard her with a certain shyness. In the milliner-shop, too, the workwomen and customers noticed Rita's dignified manner, and the ladies often said to the proprietor, half in jest and half in earnest, that there was something so queenly about the young lady who tried on the bonnets that they scarcely dared to ask her to wait on them.

Rita no longer, in her leisure hours, went down to the shore where the workmen had found her when she was a little girl, but into the wood to the old beech tree. Sitting on the edge of the hole hidden by the moss and ferns, she shut her eyes and let herself slip down. She knew now that two soft arms would carefully catch her. The solemn imperial march always sounded at her appearance, and her courtiers welcomed her with joy. She sat in her magnificent robes, with her dia-

mond crown upon her head, an hour or two on her golden throne among her subjects, while the White Lady told her a thousand things she longed to know: first about her parents, especially her mother, who had been a princess of Swan Land, then of her ancestors, of her country of Thule, its people, manners, and cus-The court ladies sang to her old songs of the greatness of her race, their wisdom in peace and heroic courage in war. Learned chamberlains repeated to her the history of Thule; she was shown dolls in the costume of the people, and pictures of her ancestors' palace, their castles, cities, and the most beautiful landscapes in her kingdom, till at last she knew everything about Thule as thoroughly as if she had always lived there and knew nothing else. It no longer seemed to her hard to leave her throne and return to the city as a poor milliner. In spirit she always lived in her empire, on Sundays and holidays she was an acknowledged empress amid the splendor of her court, and she bore with a patient smile the life she led during the week, when, plainly clad and unnoticed, she lived among the common people as if she were one of themselves.

Her foster-family gradually remarked that she left them on Sundays directly after dinner, and did not return until the evening, with a reflection of secret joy upon her face like one who has been happy several hours. Her foster-sisters put their heads together and whispered, making all sorts of guesses, which did little

honor to Rita. They wanted to find out the secret of her lonely walks, and her foster-brother undertook to follow her unseen. He did follow at some distance into the forest as far as the hole at the foot of the old beech. He did not see the squirrel that sprang before her from bough to bough, for his eyes were fixed upon Rita. Suddenly she vanished, and when he came to the place where he had lost her, he discovered the hole under the moss and ferns. He did not doubt that she had slipped down this hole, but at first he did not think it advisable to go after her. So he sat down on the moss and waited. When, however, an hour, then two hours passed, without any sign of life, he plucked up courage and began to climb down the dark opening. But the sides were very steep, the clumps of grass and moss to which he clung tore away, and amid a hail of clods of earth and stones he fell into the depths.

Soiled with dirt, his whole body covered with bruises and bumps, and his clothes torn, he struck against the door, which flew open at the shock, and rolled into the middle of the throne room. The commander of the body-guard rushed up to him and ordered his soldiers to seize the intruder. But Rita, who recognized the fellow, called loudly, "Halt!"

The marshal of the court explained that he had for feited his life, but Rita repeated: "Not a hair of his head shall be harmed! Obey your empress!" Then she said to her foster-brother, who was rubbing his aching limbs and staring stupidly around him: "It was very impertinent to follow me. This time I will forgive you. But don't do it again; my guards would not let you go a second time." She motioned to the White Lady, who gave an order to the officer of the guard. The soldiers seized the youth, flung him out of the throne room, and left him lying outside of the door. He began with great difficulty to climb up, but the steep walls of earth gave his hands and feet no support, and he always slid down again. At last the White Lady took pity on him, and when he made another attempt to climb, she raised her whirlwind, which seized him and bore him up into the woods.

The youth limped along groaning, lost his way several times, and did not reach the direct road to the city until twilight was closing in. When he reached home, Rita had been there a long time. She had told nothing about the adventure, and was somewhat anxious to hear what he would say of it to the family. When he saw her, he only grinned and said nothing. Was he unwilling to tell the story in her presence? But his mother noticed his soiled and torn clothes and the bloody scratches on his hands, and cried out: "Boy! How you look! What has happened? Have you been fighting?"

"No," replied the youth, sulkily, "it's only our dear Rita and her queer taste that are to blame. I wanted to see where she is always running. Now I know. She goes into the woods and jumps down into a deep hole. This leads into a large cave. I leaped after her, but she seems to be more skilful than I am. I fared badly. I almost broke my limbs. The cave appears to get some light through a chink in the rocks on the top. But it is dark, cold, and damp. Rita walks up and down, talking to herself. I think she is playing some kind of a farce, in which she is a princess or empress, and wants no listeners, for they would laugh at her. Don't worry, Rita, I won't disturb you again in your fool tricks."

"That will be better," replied Rita, smiling and gentle as ever. So her foster-brother had seen nothing—neither the magnificent hall nor the courtiers, neither her imperial robes nor the throne. This surprised her, it is true, but she was glad. It was better that she should remain unrecognized, since she must earn her living as a poor milliner.

Behind her back, her foster-brother told the others that Rita was evidently a little crazy, for he had heard her say plainly, in her cave, that she was an empress, had guards, and similar silly nonsense. The foster-mother replied that it came from the little gold crown embroidered on her shirt, but as her craziness did not seem dangerous, they all thought it would do no one any harm if she was allowed to go on with her folly, and they closed their eyes to her queer fancies.

So Rita lived for several years, during the week a

poor workingwoman, on Sundays a great empress, and it did not trouble her at all that she alone knew her secret. She was just twenty-one years old when one day it happened that a handsome young man, whom she had often met on her way from the house to her shop, but without noticing him, came up to her in the street, raised his hat, and said, "Miss Rita, will you allow me to say a few words to you?"

Rita blushed and answered more sternly than was her custom: "I don't know you. Leave me alone," and continued her way. The young man stood still, looking after her sorrowfully. She could not help thinking of him all the morning, and though it vexed her that he should have spoken to her in the street, she would have liked to know what he wanted to say to her.

When she went home at noon, she saw, to her astonishment, the young man sitting in her house with her foster-mother. She stood hesitating on the threshold, and the workman's wife called to her, while the young man respectfully rose from his chair: "Come in, the gentleman won't eat you. He means fairly."

The young man now spoke. "Miss Rita," he said, "I have known you for many months. I have followed you daily, without your noticing it. I ventured to speak to you in the street, because I thought that would be the easiest way. But you did perfectly right to reprove me, for it was not proper. I ought to

have done first what I did not think of until later; that is, introduce myself to your parents."

"But what do you want?" asked Rita, bewildered.
"Miss Rita," replied the young man, "I love you, and would like to marry you. Will you give me your hand?"

Rita's heart beat faster, and she lowered her eyes in confusion. "That cannot be done so quickly," she said, "I do not know you at all—"

"Don't refuse," interrupted her foster-mother; "the gentleman is a fine man and a poet."

"You are a poet?" cried Rita, wonderingly.

"At least I think so," answered the young man, modestly. "I write poems and have them printed. People buy them, and tell me that life seems easier and the world more beautiful to them when they have read them."

As Rita grew thoughtful and made no reply, he drew a little book from the pocket of his overcoat and gave it to her, adding: "Please accept this from me, Miss Rita. It contains my verses. Let them speak for me, and permit me to come to-morrow for your answer."

When with a courteous bow he left the room, the foster-mother told Rita that she ought to accept this handsome and elegant young man; it was a piece of good luck for her, and she would never find anything better. Rita said she must have time to think over so important a matter, and retiring into a corner began to read the poems. They sang of spring and sunshine,

of blossoming flowers and nightingales, of human beings who loved each other and would remain faithful in joy and sorrow, of all great and noble things which make the happiness of good people. And as Rita read on, she fancied she heard the old songs of her court singers, and the wise words of her White Lady, and her eyes grew dim till at last she could no longer see the letters plainly.

She thought of the poet all day, and at night she could not sleep. When the next noon he came for his answer, the others went out to leave the two alone, and Rita said: "I have read your poems, and I like them very much. You are really a poet. But do you know who I am?"

"You are the sweetest, most beautiful girl my eyes ever beheld," he answered warmly, "and if you would become my wife, I should be the happiest man on earth, and would never cease to sing and utter my joy in verse."

"I am a foundling, and no one knows who my parents were."

"Your parents were what they were, and you are what you are."

"I am a poor workingwoman, and shall bring you nothing except what I have on my back."

"You are yourself a treasure, which no gold in the world can outweigh. We will work and shall not lack the necessaries of life."

"Give me a little more time to think," she said gently. "So important a resolve cannot be made in an instant."

"That is true," replied the poet; "but meanwhile may I at least see you daily?"

"Yes, you may," said Rita. Then he kissed her hand and gave her a sheet of paper on which, since the day before, he had written new poems for her, more beautiful than any of the first ones.

Contradictory feelings were struggling in Rita's soul. She liked the poet, and it seemed to her a happy lot to become his wife. But she thought she ought not to promise him her hand without asking the advice of the White Lady, her only friend in the wide world, and without telling him her secret. She was so impatient that she could not wait for Sunday, but went at once to her wood, without even stopping at the shop to ask permission for an afternoon's absence. She was in such a hurry that she did not look around once on the way. So she did not see that the poet, as had been his habit for months, had come after dinner into the neighborhood of her house to follow her to the shop and enjoy all the way the sight of her lovely figure. He saw with astonishment that she did not go toward the shop, and that she was walking much faster than usual, so he hastily pursued to find out what she meant to do. Thus he tracked her into the wood, to the old beech tree and the hole half hidden by moss and ferns, where she vanished from his eyes. When he saw her suddenly disappear down the hole, his only thought was that she had met with an accident, and with a cry of terror he ran forward and without hesitation leaped after her. He fell on his feet at the bottom, without doing himself any harm, and saw before him, in the dim light, tall gilded folding doors, from beyond which he heard the clank of arms and solemn music. He resolutely pushed open the door and found himself in the throne room, just at the moment that Rita had taken her seat upon the throne, and the White Lady was clothing and crowning her as an empress. When he saw this, he rushed through the ranks of the guards to the steps of the throne, knelt, and touched his forehead to the floor.

Rita had been unable to keep back a low cry of surprise when she saw the poet. This time, too, the guards seized him, but Rita waved her hand and commanded them to release him. Descending the steps, she raised the poet. He did not dare to look at her, and only murmured: "I always suspected it. You are of royal birth. Graciously forgive my presumption in having dared to love you."

"So you see my throne and my crown, my hall and my courtiers?" asked Rita.

The poet looked at her in astonishment, and replied: "Why shouldn't I? The splendor dazzles me, it is true, but it does not wholly blind me."

Rita, turning to the White Lady, said: "He is a

poet, and he wants to marry me. What do you advise me to do?"

"Your Majesty," replied the faithful fairy, "he is of a good race. He has the eagle eyes, which see secret things. He is an aristocrat, for he is a poet. If you love him as he does you, marry him."

Rita blushed deeply and cast down her eyes, the White Lady took her hand and laid it in the poet's, the courtiers burst into loud cheers, the music struck up a joyous march, and the portraits of the emperor and empress of Thule, on both sides of the throne, began to shine wonderfully. The court-marshal bent the knee before the poet and said, "Your Highness, by your engagement to our illustrious imperial mistress, you become Prince Consort, and have a right to the highest honors." He gave a low order to a page, and instantly several court lackeys appeared with purple velvet cushions, on which lay a gold embroidered uniform, the ribbon of an order, a sword, and gold spurs, and placed them all on the floor at the foot of the throne. Rita asked, smiling, "Will you put these on?"

"I dare not — the honor is too great — not to-day," answered the poet in bewilderment. Then in a lower tone he added, "Your Majesty — beloved Rita — since you are willing to give me the greatest happiness — since I am your betrothed husband — I will venture to make one request —"

"What is it?" asked Rita, kindly.

"Send your courtiers away — let us be a moment alone — that I may embrace you for the first time as my bride."

"There is no solitude for an empress," said Rita; "let us go."

Rising, she walked, leaning on her future husband's arm, amid the usual honors, to the door, left her imperial robes in the hands of the White Lady, and a moment later, with the poet, was at the entrance of the hole. Here, under the rustling branches of the old beech, seen only by the faithful squirrel, Rita was clasped in her lover's arms and exchanged the first kiss.

The poet was dazed by all he had seen and experienced, but he did not venture to question his bride. Rita guessed what was passing in his mind, and on their way home told him all. Only she begged him to keep it secret, for if he repeated the story, people would merely laugh at them.

The betrothal was celebrated at the foster-parents', and the wedding soon followed, with two celebrations,—one in the secret empire, and one among ordinary mortals. Rita left her work place and opened a milliner's shop herself, and the poet, in his happiness, wrote the most beautiful poems and became very famous. During the first year of their marriage, they often went to the wood, and the young husband found great pleasure in sitting in his princely robes upon the golden throne, beside his imperial consort. But at the end of a year

the stork brought a little child, and for some time Rita could not go out, and her poet did not know whether he could appear at court alone. After a month Rita went to the wood again for the first time, taking with her her baby, on which she had put the little shirt with the gold crown, which her foster-father had given to her on her wedding day, and descended to the secret empire to present her child to the courtiers. There was great rejoicing and paying of homage, and the White Lady took the little one in her arms, caressed it, and whispered ardent wishes for its happiness. When her faithful subjects had grow calm again, Rita addressed them in a very grave tone: "Noble lords and ladies," she said, "we shall see each other to-day for the last time. My work, my child, my husband, claim all my hours, and I no longer have any half-days of leisure to spend in your midst. Your loyalty touches me, but unfortunately it is of no use. Return to Thule, make your peace with the King of the Pole, and remember me faithfully, as I shall always remember you. And now, farewell."

The ladies and gentlemen fell upon their knees. All were sobbing. Tears rolled down the cheeks of even the old guards. The White Lady, weeping softly, clasped Rita in her arms and would not let her go. She gently released herself, took up her little child again, gave her hand kindly to all, and slowly approached the door. Here she cast one last look at the court, the hall, her crown, and her royal robes, kissed the White Lady

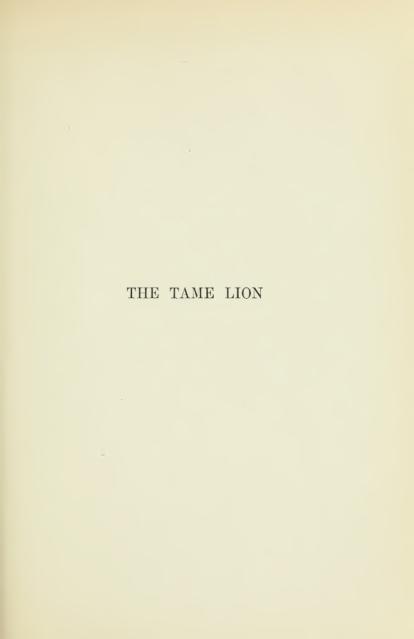
for the last time, and in an instant was in the upper world.

At the foot of the old beech, Rita said sadly to her husband: "The sacrifice is made. The imperial splendor is over forever."

"No," replied the poet, bending the knee before her.
"To me you are and always will be the empress, as I felt and recognized you before you had revealed your-self to me in your magnificence, and so you always will be to your children also, now and forever."

And so it was. Wreaths were afterward bestowed on the poet, which he laid at the feet of his wife. They became prosperous and distinguished, had numerous children, reared them to be excellent men and women, whom they taught that they must be better and more competent than ordinary people; and though no one of them became an emperor or an empress, they were all such estimable citizens, that, after many, many years, when Rita was dead, the grateful city placed a monument on the spot upon the shore where little Margarita Bölgebarn had been found.

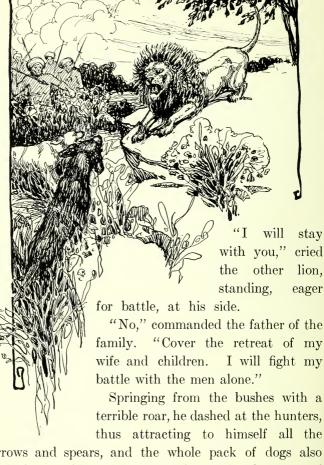






## THE TAME LION

Once upon a time there lived in the Levant, in a castle surrounded by palm groves, a wealthy nobleman. He was very fond of hunting, and often went out to chase gazelles and boars. But in the wooded mountains which surrounded his estate there were often also tracks of great beasts of prey: bears, panthers, and even lions, and then he could not rest until he had driven away or killed them, and thus rid the country of them. One day lions had again appeared in the neighborhood and destroyed the farmers' cows and sheep. They came running to the castle with cries of grief, begging for help. The nobleman at once organized a hunt. He soon discovered numerous tracks, which showed that there was a family, perhaps a whole troop of lions. After a sharp pursuit, they succeeded in surrounding the robbers in a valley. There were a terribly large and fierce lion, his lioness, three cubs, and another full-grown lion, perhaps a brother or a friend of the family. When the huge lion saw himself driven into a corner, he said to his wife: "Save yourself and the little ones. I will face the men until you are safe. Then I will follow. If I should fall, remember me, and bring up the cubs to be capable lions."



arrows and spears, and the whole pack of dogs also rushed upon him. His companion took advantage of this to lead the lioness and her three cubs out of the valley in the opposite direction. The few beaters who were stationed there moved aside in terror, and when the flying lions had the beaters behind them, they hurried with long leaps up the mountain, on whose other side they would be safe.

The lion which had made the stand had struck down with heavy blows of his mighty paws the first dogs which ventured to rush upon him; but, pierced by numerous wounds, soon fell himself. He yielded up his life with one last roar, which thundered through the valley like a farewell to his fleeing family. Not until he lay dead in his blood on the ground did the hunters look after the other lions, and discovered them on the top of the mountain which they had already reached. Instantly a new and eager chase began, with shouts, winding of horns, and barking of dogs. The lioness and her companions had a considerable start, and could easily have escaped their enemies, but the three cubs could not keep up with them, and fell behind. The hunters and the pack came nearer and nearer, arrows were already whizzing around them, the little ones uttered a whine of fear, and their mother stopped.

"Forward! forward!" roared her companion, sternly.
"I will not leave my children to fall into the hands of human beings," replied the lioness. Then she quickly but tenderly licked their eyes and noses, saying, "We must carry them, they cannot keep up."

She seized two in her mouth by the skin at the back

of the neck, the devoted friend took the third in the same way, and they continued their flight. The lioness. whose strength was doubled by her maternal love, dashed forward with tremendous bounds. But the male lion was not used to carrying a cub in his mouth, the burden delayed him, and he could not follow the lioness. hunters were close at his heels, he lost his presence of mind and dropped the cub intrusted to his care, that he might fly faster. This cowardly forgetfulness of duty did not save him. He was struck by several spears, and fell dying. The cub, which was vainly trying with its little soft paws to run after its mother, who was already far away, was instantly surrounded by the pack, which would have made short work of it if their master had not jumped into the middle of the barking, howling, snapping circle and driven the dogs back. Seizing the spitting, scratching little lion, he put it in a bag, and gave the signal with the horn that the hunt was over; for he saw that the lioness had escaped, and he was very well satisfied with having killed two grown lions and captured a lion cub alive. When the lioness saw that the hunters were no longer following her, she lay down with her two rescued little ones to rest and wait for her companion with the third. As he did not come, she bravely set out, after several hours, to look for him, but found only his skinned carcass and no trace of the third little one. She burst into a piercing wail of grief and dragged herself slowly back to the two cubs

she had left. This day's hunt had robbed her of a husband and a child, without counting the friend. Her lamentations for the dead filled all the animals in the desert with terror all night long.

Meanwhile the little lion had been taken to the castle, where all the members of the household gathered around him to admire him. He was the dearest little creature, no larger than a big cat, with fine yellow fur, and a heavy tassel at the end of his tail. At first he behaved badly, biting and scratching everybody who wanted to pat him. But gradually he grew quiet and became trusting and tame. At his age people forget quickly and easily accommodate themselves to changes. His mother and brothers, and the free life in the forests and desert, soon vanished from his memory; he knew only the human beings who fed him liberally and treated him kindly; he willingly allowed himself to be petted, thanking them for it by loud purring and licking with his little rough tongue, and became a favorite with everybody. He slept in his master's room on soft rugs, played and tussled with the children of the family in the castle courtyard, and ran after the nobleman in his walks like a dog. He had been given the name of Samson, and came obediently when he was called. He considered himself a member of the family and clung to the persons whom he regarded as his relatives with all the warmth of his lion heart.

He was by no means popular with the other domestic

animals. The horses snorted and kicked if he put his head into their stable or came near them in the meadow behind the castle, the dogs growled and showed their teeth, the fowls scattered before him, flapping their wings and squawking. He was friendly to them all, but they all repulsed him unkindly. Only the cat was gracious from the beginning and persistently sought his society. She treated him respectfully and addressed him in the tone of an inferior. When he grew larger and became a sensible young lion, she made remarks upon his manner to the other animals. "You ought not to be too familiar with the rabble of horses and dogs," she said.

"Why not?" asked the lion. "Don't we all live under the same roof? Are we not companions and friends?"

"No," replied the cat, "you are a prince, and the others are a race of slaves. You are a lion, and the others are mares and curs. You treat them as your equals, and their gratitude is to hate you. They would gladly kill you."

"I don't believe it, cat," cried the lion, indignantly.

"Yet it is so," the cat insisted. "To human beings, too, you ought to be more mindful of your dignity as the son of a king. Do not give your heart to them. They will reward your love with ingratitude."

"Now listen," growled the lion. "I will not allow you to speak ill of my master and his family. I belong to them and they belong to me; we are one flesh and blood; I have my recognized place in the household, and nothing can separate us."

The cat bowed humbly and stole sadly away, for the lion turned his back upon her.

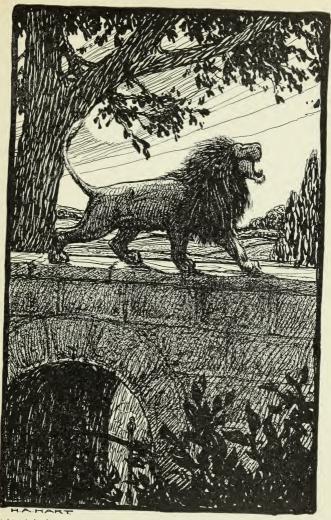
Samson grew up to the full size and strength of his species. Yet his disposition did not change; he remained affectionate to the lord of the castle and his wife and children, his playmates, and friendly to all the domestic animals. But gradually they began to treat him differently. The mistress complained that he smelt badly and would not allow him to remain in her room. In order not to hurt his feelings, he was told that he had now grown up, and it was not proper for him to have his bed at night in his mistress's room. He was given a sleeping place in the kennels; but the dogs declared that he was a stranger and an intruder; they refused to let him stay among them, and to prevent a riot in the pack, they were obliged to assign a special barn to the lion. The nobleman's children no longer wanted to play with him; for although he submitted to everything from them and lovingly stroked and licked them when they cuffed and pulled him, they were secretly afraid of him. If he asked them to romp with him, according to their custom, in the castle courtyard, they sent him word by a servant that they had no time, they were busy with their teachers. It became uncomfortable for the neighboring landowners to meet him roaming freely about, when they came to the castle,

and they accused the owner of carelessness. "Such beasts can never be trusted," they said; "sooner or later their nature will break out." They repeated this so often that he at last became uneasy and ordered Samson to be chained. When the servants prepared to obey this direction, the lion uttered a roar, which made them start back as fast as possible. They told their master that Samson rebelled against being confined, and the nobleman went down into the courtyard himself and said, "Be good, Samson, let us adorn you with this little chain."

"But why?" the lion complained. "What have I done to deserve punishment?"

"It is no punishment," replied the nobleman soothingly, caressingly placing, as he spoke, the thick, heavy chain around his neck; "it is a distinction. You shall ornament my courtyard by day, and be free at night."

Samson hung his head and submitted quietly to his master's will. Now he was a prisoner, scorned and mocked at by all the occupants of the courtyard. The horse kicked out at him as it passed, the dogs barked at him, and did all sorts of naughty things just beyond the reach of his paws, and even the fowls scratched and cackled boldly close in front of his terrible jaws. Samson would not notice it. He made himself believe that all these things were unintentional. "Horses kick because it is their nature," he said to himself; "it is the nature of dogs to be dirty, and the hens show



"At night he walked around the castle walls, as a tireless watcher."



their touching confidence in me by going on with their affairs just under my nose."

At night he was always released from his chain and walked around the castle walls, as a tireless watcher, until the morning. Neither enemy nor evil-doer dared to come near when he saw on the top of the wall, or behind the battlements of the tower, in the moonlight, his huge figure outlined against the dark sky, or on moonless nights heard the thunder of his voice. On hunting days, too, the lord of the castle unfastened Samson's chain and took him with him. Then the lion conquered for him boars, aurochs, and bears, dragged the prey in his mouth to the castle, and did work which otherwise would have required twenty brave and strong huntsmen. And when it was all over, he patiently let the chain be put on again, licked the aching wounds which he had received in the battle with the strongest and most dangerous animals in the wilderness, and rejoiced that he had again been able to be useful to his master.

Then the house cat stole up to him and whispered in his ear: "Prince, now you see how they treat you! You ought not to submit to this unworthy fate any longer!"

"Unworthy fate? That, adorned with a magnificent chain, I am placed beside the gate as the most beautiful ornament of the castle?"

"Ah, Prince, you do not believe that yourself. Use the liberty which is given you; they want to profit by your strength in hunting! Stay in the forest! Remember that your home is there, that there you are master!"

But the lion started up and answered fiercely: "Not another word, or I'll break your neck. My home is here in the castle. I am the kinsman and companion of its owners, and will not listen to your senseless tattle."

Meanwhile his mother had never forgotten him. She mourned him for years and always remained in the neighborhood, because she hoped some time to learn what had happened to him after he had fallen into the hands of human beings. When the rumor began to spread among the animals of the woods and the wilderness that the lord of the castle was using a lion to help him in hunting, a lion, which, contrary to all justice and custom, attacked the sons of the desert and wrought more havoc among them than twenty men, it finally reached her ears also, and she rejoiced loudly, though the monkeys, peacocks, and gazelles brought the story to her in perplexity and anger. Her mother heart instantly suspected that the hunting lion of the castle lord was her own lost son, and she bade one of the two sons who had remained with her to make inquiries, and to try whether he could not approach his brother and bring him back to his family.

The lion set out one dark night, trotted swiftly over the desert, across the mountains, and through the forest to the palm grove, stole cautiously through it to the wall around the castle, and was just preparing, by the exertion of all his strength, to leap over it, when a terrible voice from above thundered, "Who goes there?" At the same instant he saw two large, fiery eyes glaring at him from the darkness.

The voice, which would have filled any other living creature with fright, made his heart throb joyfully, for he recognized it as that of one of his own kin. "A good friend!" he called back in a subdued tone; "come down to me, if you are free, and, if not, I will come up to you and set you at liberty."

"Of course I am free," replied the lion on the top of the wall, proudly; "but who are you?"

"I am a lion like yourself; more, I am your brother, your own flesh and blood. I have come to take you back to our mother, from whom men stole you when you were very small, and who has never ceased to mourn for you."

"You lie!" the lion called back from the wall. "I am no lion, but an inhabitant of the castle; my brothers are the sons of the lord and lady of the castle. I have no others. Begone, or it will be the worse for you!"

The blood of the lion at the foot of the wall began to boil with rage. "Scoundrel!" he shouted angrily. "You have no lion soul. You have become a cowardly slave of man. Once more: will you return to us, or shall we finally thrust you out of our community?"

Samson uttered a roar, which echoed horribly from the

distant mountains, "Begone, if you value your life!" His thundering voice waked all the inmates of the castle, the dogs began to bark furiously, people began to move about in all the rooms, weapons clanked, doors banged; the lion outside heard these threatening noises and thought it advisable to retreat. He hastened back through the forests and across the mountains to his mother in the desert, and reported the failure of his mission.

The lioness listened to his story with deep feeling. "I know now that my child is living. That is the main thing. We must not wonder that he is estranged from us. The cunning of men has poisoned his young mind. But it cannot be difficult to make the voice of blood speak. You did not understand how to manage him. I will go and talk with him myself. You shall see that I will bring you a brother who will be glad to have found his relatives again."

She scarcely waited for night to close in before she set out for the castle. Her two sons and several neighbors and friends followed at a short distance, to aid her in case of danger. The lion was keeping watch that night even more carefully than usual, saw her coming a long distance off, and shouted a fierce "Halt!" before she had reached the foot of the castle wall.

The lioness's strong heart trembled when she heard the challenge. She recognized the father's voice in the son's. "Your mother has come to take you home. My son, come down! Let me lick your dear face."

"You are talking nonsense," replied the lion, roughly.
"I don't know you. I am Samson, the comrade of men, and have nothing in common with such people as you. If you were not a woman, I would show you that I am not to be insulted with impunity."

"Is this the way you speak to your mother, who has mourned you for years?"

"The devil is your son, not I," Samson answered.

"Is it possible," groaned the lioness, "you deny your own blood, you forget your origin, you shame the memory of your glorious father, who died for you? You cast off your mother, you serve the men who killed your father, and are your worst enemies—"

Samson's only answer was to roar: "Loose the dogs! Send out the archers! The foe!"

The lioness saw that further efforts were useless, and she went back to the wilderness in bitter grief.

The next morning, when the lord of the castle put on Samson's chain, as usual, he scolded him sharply.

"You must be crazy to make such a terrible racket as you have done for the last two nights. You roused us all out of our sleep."

"Forgive me, master," replied Samson, humbly; "there were lions around the castle with evil designs. I was obliged to do my duty as watchman."

"Lions?" asked the nobleman, looking at Samson, suspiciously.

"Yes, my lord," answered Samson; "and I advise you to arrange a great hunt without delay to destroy the band of robbers."

The lord of the castle went out of the gate, searched in the neighborhood of the walls, and soon found numerous lion tracks on the ground. He called the neighbors together, they appeared with their packs of hounds in the castle courtyard, and set out with great tumult, shouting, and barking of dogs for the hunt. Samson waited vainly to be set free from his chain. When the lord of the castle passed him, he cried: "And I? Am I not going with you?"

"We shall hunt lions to-day," replied the lord of the castle.

"That is just why I want to go," said Samson.

"But they are your relatives," observed the nobleman, "and it might be painful for you—"

Samson, deeply offended, interrupted: "My relatives? Have I deserved this from you? Do I no longer belong to you? What have I in common with the lion rabble? I beg you to let me share the hunt. You must not refuse me."

"As you choose," muttered the castle lord, and reluctantly unfastened the chain.

Samson was no sooner free than he sprang out of the gate with tremendous bounds and rushed to the head of the hunters. Always far in advance of all the others, he followed with impatient haste for hours the tracks leading through the desert, until he had overtaken the lions. When he saw the troop of fugitives, fresh ardor for battle seemed to seize upon him, and he dashed forward with such fierce eagerness that the dogs and the hunters could not keep up with him. He reached the lions almost alone, and with open jaws and a tremendous roar sprang with a mighty bound into the very midst of their group. They instantly surrounded him, fiercely attacked him, struck him to the earth with heavy blows from their paws, and tore his body with teeth and claws, while his brothers shouted in fury, "Death to the traitor!"

But before they could wound him dangerously, his mother was at his side roaring to his assailants, "Back! back!" Then she turned to Samson, who lay bleeding on the ground with foaming jaws: "Go back to your men, if you find your happiness with them. I lose you to-day for the second time. Go! go!" Without a single glance behind she continued her flight, the other lions followed her, and all soon disappeared beyond the mountains.

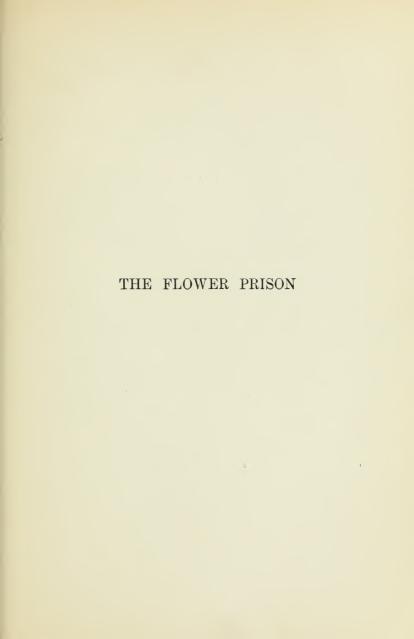
Meanwhile the pack had reached Samson, who was left alone. In the heat of the chase, they either did not recognize him or pretended not to do so, and pressed upon him thirsting for blood. He was still dazed by the recent battle, and the sudden attack of his

hunting companions so astonished him, that he made no movement to defend himself. In an instant ten bloodhounds were hanging to each paw, six to his tail, eight to his ears, mane, and lips. He could only utter one piteous call for help, then he died under the bites of countless greedy teeth. His mother heard his deathcry at a long distance and returned without delay to help him. She came too late to save her son and could only share his fate. When the lord of the castle reached the spot, both lions were dead. He could do nothing



but drive away the dogs, that they might not tear them to pieces and spoil their skins.

The nobleman had these made into a cover for his bed and a rug, and when afterward he had guests who were strangers, he proudly showed them the magnificent skins, and told them all the details of the history of the lions, one of which, amid great peril, he had captured partly with his own hand and made his chained slave, and the other he had killed in battle. Then the listeners admired his courage and praised him for his brave deeds.





## THE FLOWER PRISON

ONCE upon a time a student took a summer journey through Switzerland. As a good gymnast, he was a bold and skilful mountain climber, who liked to scale the steepest cliffs and the highest peaks. In many ways he was an excellent young fellow; but he had no regard for animals and plants, which enjoy their lives as well as we, and do not harm human beings. This was very strange because he was a forester's son, and people who live in the woods are usually fond of everything that blooms and runs and flies, except toadstools and beasts of prey. When he lived at his father's house, the student shot squirrels and crows, often even cuckoos and thrushes, which enliven the silent forest with their calls and songs:

In Switzerland he would have liked to kill chamois and marmots; but he did not see these pretty creatures except in the zoölogical garden, where they were safe from his murderous gun. So he vented his love of destruction on the poor, defenceless flowers. If he came to an Alpine meadow, he behaved like a savage. He gathered all the blossoms he could reach, not a few to put in his hat, not to dry one or another to keep as a

memento of the beautiful days of travel, not even to give to beloved friends or acquaintances, but from pure wantonness. He pulled them by dozens, by hundreds, till he had an immense bunch, which he carried for a while until he grew tired, and then merely threw it away.

He was especially fond of plucking Alpine roses and edelweiss, not only because they are particularly beautiful, but because they grow in places very hard to climb, so it needs much strength, skill, and courage to reach them.

One day he had again climbed the mountains with alpenstock and knapsack, and came to the border line of the perpetual snow. Below him lay the dark pine woods and the sunny pastures, on which cows with tinkling bells were grazing. He could only hear the distant sound, but did not see the cattle, the meadow, and the huts of the herdsmen, for he was far above the clouds and they concealed everything below. Before him was a steep field, completely covered with Alpine roses. Here and there an edelweiss raised its velvety, starshaped blossom above the green grass. The student tore up all the flowers he saw, the single ones, those growing in bunches, the full-blown blossoms, the partly opened ones, and the buds. All were stuffed into his knapsack, which was soon filled. After spending an hour in this way, there were no more flowers to pick. The field, which had looked like a carpet richly embroidered with gold and silver, was now entirely green.

He looked around to try to discover a few more victims, and saw at some distance above him a large rock, which projected like a huge nose from the precipice. This boulder was completely covered with the most beautiful edelweiss. He had never seen so many of

these wonderful blossoms in one place. It seemed as though they had fled there to find a refuge where they would be safe from the pursuit of hostile men, for it was almost impossible to reach them. The overhanging rock connected was with the mountain only by a narrow ridge like a bridge, and even this was so steep and

rough that it would have been difficult even for a chamois to cross it.

"Aha, there's something for me!" cried the student, joyously, and at once prepared to risk the dangerous crossing and reach the rock, where he meant to seize the edelweiss. But he had scarcely touched the narrow

ridge, where he could only move forward on his hands and knees, when he suddenly saw a woman's figure. Raising her finger in warning, she called loudly, "Stop!"

He stood up and stared at her in astonishment. Where could she have come from? he wondered. Had she perhaps been lying in the tall grass so that he did not see her? Her appearance was rather unlike other women. She was dainty, delicate rather than strong, small rather than large. She wore a full white silk gown over a green petticoat, and her little silvery white feet were bare. In her golden hair was a wreath of the most beautiful flowers of every color. In spite of her anger, her face was very lovely, and she was surrounded by a delicious perfume like the fragrance of roses, lilies, violets, and carnations, which could be noticed at a considerable distance.

The student quickly recovered from his surprise and took a step forward. But the stranger cried a second time: "Stop! No farther!"

"Why not?" he asked insolently. "Does this mountain belong to you?"

"Back!" she called, without answering his question, "you have nothing to do here."

"You are very familiar," he replied scornfully; "perhaps we know each other?"

"I know you," said the stranger. "You are a wicked man. You are a murderer of the flowers. Look at your knapsack! It is filled with blossoms which you



"Do not sin against me and my flowers."



have cruelly killed. But you shall at least leave me these edelweiss. Why do you pursue them here? Cannot they be safe, even thus high above the world, from your designs?"

"I will not answer you in the same familiar way," replied the student, merrily; "for it is my habit to be courteous to young ladies. But I shall not turn back for your sermon, excellent as it is. The flowers are for human beings. I want these edelweiss, and I shall do whatever I choose with them."

He again began to climb and creep forward. The stranger drew back before him, exclaiming, "You will repent it." He only laughed and soon reached the projecting rock. The white-robed girl was standing in the midst of the edelweiss, which were turning their silvery stars toward her from eyery direction as if imploring her aid.

"Let me warn you for the last time," she cried; "do not sin against me and my flowers!"

The young man's only answer was to break off a number of the finest edelweiss and offer the bouquet, with a mocking bow, to the beautiful, angry girl. She dealt him a light blow on the hand. It was as if a butterfly had brushed him with its wings in passing; but a shock darted like lightning through fingers and arm to the shoulder, and he was obliged to drop the flowers as if paralyzed.

"You have pronounced your own sentence. Go;

before the day is over your punishment will overtake you," she said solemnly, and before he could make any reply she had vanished.

Fear suddenly seized him, and he hurried as fast as he could away from the mysterious rock with the edel-weiss, down to the pasture where the cows with the tinkling bells were grazing. He felt relieved when he saw the herdsman, asked for a drink of milk, and told him the strange adventure he had just had.

The herdsman listened intently, and said: "Do you know who that was? It was the Flower Queen."

"What? Have you a Flower Queen in free Switzerland?" asked the student, forcing a jesting tone.

"Don't mock," replied the herdsman, very gravely. "She is powerful, and it is not wise to make her angry."

The student wished to inquire still farther, and went on: "Queer that the royal lady runs about barefoot! Doesn't she catch cold up here? Or is she trying the Kneipp cure?"

The herdsman cast a sullen look at him, turned his back, and went into his hut, whose door he banged loudly behind him. The student said no more and continued his way down the mountain.

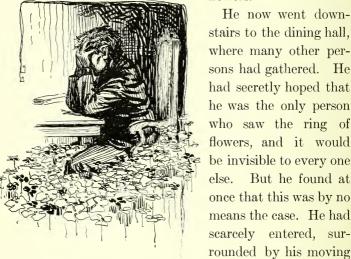
True, he did not exactly believe the story of the Flower Queen and her power, yet he could not conquer a feeling of anxiety, and was much more careful in climbing than usual. He reached the little town at the foot of the mountains without accident, went to his hotel,

flung the knapsack with the Alpine flowers carelessly into a corner of his room, and dressed for dinner.

When he opened his door to go to the dining room, he suddenly stood still in astonishment. In the corridor was a dense mass of flowers, which formed a ring around him. There were Alpine roses and edelweiss, gentians, rhododendrons, and violets, such as he had gathered in his love of destruction in the meadow above. And not only these, but tall, proud lilies and irises, modest forget-me-nots and primroses, fragrant jasmines and scentless corn-flowers and poppies, which he was in the habit of tearing up or breaking with his cane in his walks through the fields and meadows. He rubbed his eyes. His senses must be deceiving him. He had never seen these flowers in the passage before. To convince himself of their reality, he stepped forward and stretched his hand toward them. The flowers drew back the same distance, and were beyond his reach. He turned toward the side — the same thing happened. The flowers moved away before him and followed behind. Not until he almost struck the wall with his nose did the blossoms vanish before him; but wherever there was room for them, on the floor to remain at the proper distance, they stood in close ranks about him. The flower circle moved with him, swiftly or slowly, as he walked quickly or slowly, stopped when he stopped, kept always at the same distance, and opened only when it met a wall or some similar obstruction.

"Hocus-pocus," he muttered, turning on his heel to convince himself that he was shut in on all sides. After a moment's thought, he shrugged his shoulders, thinking: "What harm will it do me? On the contrary, it is very amusing to be accompanied by a guard of

flowers."



circle of blossoms, when all the guests stopped eating and stared at him. Some half rose from their seats to see better, others even left them and came nearer. One little girl cried out, "Oh, look at the lovely flowers which are moving near us!" ran to the ring, and tried to gather a lily. But her hand grasped only the empty air, and running back to her mother, she hid her face in the folds of her gown, afraid of these

queer flowers which the eye saw, yet the fingers could not touch.

The student pretended not to notice the stir in the dining room, and rapped for the waiter. The man came, started at the sight of the flowers which surrounded the guest and his table, and at first seemed to wish to climb over them. After a short hesitation, he changed his mind, and without heeding the student's impatient calls he went quickly to the head waiter to tell him the extraordinary thing which he had just seen. The head waiter told the proprietor of the hotel, and the latter went himself to the student, toward whom all eyes were turned.

"Sir," said the landlord, "we cannot have any jugglery here. I beg you to stop this trick."

"I won't allow you to say such things to me," cried the student, excitedly. "I'm no juggler, I am a student."

"Then put a stop to this flower show," ordered the hotel keeper, sternly.

The student only shrugged his shoulders, muttering impatiently, "I cannot."

"In that case," replied the hotel-keeper, "I must ask you to leave my house at once."

"Very well," answered the student, "I'll go early to-morrow morning. But give me something to eat now, for I've been climbing among the mountains all day and am hungry."

"No, you'll get nothing here, and I can't keep you till to-morrow," said the hotel-keeper, resolutely.

The student could do nothing but rise and leave the dining room, still surrounded by his flower ring, which steadily kept pace with him. When he reached his chamber and began to pack, he found his knapsack empty. All the flowers with which he had filled it had disappeared.

He was obliged to carry his baggage himself, for no hotel servant or porter would be seen in the street with him and his moving circle of flowers. Children and grown people ran after him with shouts, and at every hotel where he went with his escort of flowers and yelling street-urchins he was refused admittance. He could get neither a warm supper nor a bed, and had nothing to do except, late in the evening, to take a train and leave the inhospitable little city.

He had scarcely entered the station when the flowers vanished. He uttered a sigh of relief, for he thought he was freed from his flower prison. The Flower Queen, he believed gleefully, probably only had power in her mountain and in the valley at its foot. It went no farther. But he was very much mistaken, as he was soon to discover. The flowers had disappeared only because, in the narrow space, whose walls he could reach everywhere by stretching out his hands and feet, there was no room for their circle. But he had scarcely gone out after a very uncomfortable night, scarcely set foot on

the broad steps of the station, when the ring closed around him and moved on at the same pace.

Fury seized him and he hurled his long alpenstock into the midst of the thick, fresh blossoms. Like lightning they swayed far apart, though without separating, and the staff did not touch them. When, grinding his

teeth, he picked it up, the gap closed, and the circle was as regular as before. He saw that it would do no good to act like a crazy man. The flower prison was securely fastened. He could not escape from it. All the running, leaping, striking, and



throwing missiles was useless. The flowers were more nimble than he, and the distance between him and the wide hedge of living flowers never changed.

He actually hated the bright blossoms, whose beauty seemed to mock him, and shut his eyes so that he could not see them. But he could smell their perfume, and the delicious fragrance would not let him forget them for a moment. To escape, he took the only way which had proved possible. Amid the stares of all the people in the railroad station, he went on the first train and travelled without stopping home to his father, the forester.

When the forester saw his son surrounded by his guard of rare and common flowers, mountain and field blossoms, he remained motionless with amazement, and could scarcely find words to ask, "Boy, what does this mean?"

The student told him how the ring had suddenly sprung up around him, and had left him only in the railroad station; but did not mention his destruction of the Alpine blossoms and his meeting with the Flower Queen.

"Oh, father," he pleaded, after he had finished his story, "help me, tell me how I can escape from this flower prison. If I don't get rid of it, it will be impossible for me to live among human beings."

The forester thought a long time, then he said: "I have never seen such a thing, and don't understand it. But so far as I know, flowers don't bloom here in the winter. It will soon be autumn. Stay in the house till the frost comes. That will probably kill your blossoms, unless all the laws of nature fail."

This was a happy thought. The student threw his arms around his wise father's neck. He was obliged to interrupt his studies, for he could not return to the university. But he tried to have patience. Four months

would soon be over, then Christmas would come, and his misery would be ended.

To shut out the unbearable sight of the flowers, he locked himself into an attic room, which was almost as small as a closet. No prison could be so uncomfortable as this tiny chamber. But he preferred to be surrounded by board walls, rather than by the moving circle of flowers. He ventured out of his hiding place only on dark nights to stretch his stiff limbs a trifle by a walk through the forest, and to breathe a little fresh air. He did not mind running against trees and stumbling over stumps and roots. He preferred anything, even bruises, bumps, and aching limbs, to his prison of flowers. Yet even during the darkest nights they did not remain wholly invisible; for besides the fragrance, a faint light came from the blossoms, and they shone around him like an army of glow-worms.

He found the time very long, but it gradually passed, and Christmas came. The winter proved unusually severe. The snow lay heaped breast-high, and in the December nights one could hear the boughs outside cracking in the forest. After a very cold night, the student ventured out into the forest early in the morning. He had scarcely passed the door of the house when the circle of flowers closed around him. He waded through the deep snow, muttering grimly, "Just wait a little while, this will finish you." He stayed in the woods until he was almost frozen. His nose was blue, his ears

were stiff, his fingers like ice; but the flowers did not seem to be injured by the cold, and were as fresh and fragrant on the snow as if it were the loveliest May day. So, after several hours of suffering, the student went back to the forest house, and with chattering teeth said, "Father, the frost will kill me before it harms those hateful flowers."

"Yes, my poor boy," replied his father, sadly, "and now my knowledge is over. Think for yourself till you find some way to break this magic spell."

The student shut himself up again in his tiny garret room, and thought of his misfortune and how he could escape from it. At last he had an idea. Perlfaps his father was right; the cold must surely kill the flowers, only the frost was not severe enough here. Suppose he should go to the north pole, or as near it as he could get? He would see whether the blossoms would stand it there too.

No sooner was this plan thought of than it was done. His preparations were soon made, and that very evening he left his home to go through the fog and darkness to take the train in the nearest city. For several days he travelled without stopping straight toward the north, as far as the railroad went, then he went on board a whaler, which carried him far up into the icy seas, and did not leave the vessel until the frozen water would allow no farther passage. But he had scarcely set his foot upon the boundless plain of ice when the whole

circlet of flowers sprang up on it and moved along with him as gayly as ever, blossoming as brightly about him as if the mildest spring breeze was stirring their petals.

This time the student determined to defy them. He set forth, dragging after him a little sledge loaded with

provisions, thinking spitefully how much the blossoms would suffer in the fierce winter cold. The northern lights alone brightened the gloomy, pathless wilderness of ice; the polar bears often trotted up to him, but stopped when they saw the unknown flowers, and dared not cross their circle. For a week the young man bore all the discomforts



of the polar night; the cold, and the tiresome tramping over the rough ice; then he saw that the flowers were not harmed in the least, and discouraged and disheartened he gave up the trial. Now he attempted to find a ship again. It was not easy, and when, after many anxious days, he at last discovered one, he sailed back, always keeping shut in his cabin, to Hamburg.

What was to be done next? The flowers could bear the most severe cold without injury; he knew that. Perhaps drought and a hot sun would be worse for them. He determined to go at once to the desert of Sahara, where no plant can live. Over land and sea, in cars and ships, he hastened to Africa, and made his way into the wilderness as fast as he could. When the camels saw his ring of flowers, they dashed madly up to feed on them. But they only bit the empty air, and looked so disappointed and astonished that the student would have laughed heartily if he had felt inclined to be merry. The Bedouins, too, gathered around the stranger, staring in wonder at the magnificent flowers on the burning yellow sand, where they had never seen even a blade of grass or a tiny green leaf. Then they threw themselves in the dust before him, believing that he must be some great magician. They invited him into their tents, entertained him with milk and dates, and made him understand that they wanted him to be their chief.

The flowers throve in the heat of the desert just as well as in the ice at the pole. The student soon saw this. But here they attracted flattering notice, and instead of making him miserable brought him dignity and honor. He became accustomed to the thought of spending his life among the Bedouins as their lord and ruler. Under

such pleasant circumstances his flower prison did not trouble him, and he snapped his fingers at the Flower Queen. It was hard to give up his home; but he was still young, and who could tell what might happen.

But his comfort did not last long. The former ruler, whom the Bedouins had removed on his account. plotted to ruin his successor. He persuaded the oldest men of the tribe to ask the Father of the Flowers, as they called the student, for a perpetually flowing spring and frequent rain for their oasis. They followed the crafty Bedouin's advice. The student, though he could not understand a word of Arabic, knew very well what they wanted, and replied that he could not fulfil their wish. They did not believe it, for a magician who could make a thick, fresh hedge of flowers grow out of the sand of the desert must surely be able to give them a spring and rain if he only would. His refusal was nothing but sheer malice, for which they would punish him. They agreed to kill him in the night. A Bedouin woman, who pitied the young foreigner, warned him in time, and with her help he escaped in the twilight.

The glory of ruling and the pleasant life were again over. In despair he returned to Europe, and when he reached the coast of the Mediterranean, he asked himself whether it would not be the wisest thing he could do to jump into the sea and end his imprisonment by death. But when he was preparing for this wicked act, a secret voice said: "Perhaps I can soothe the Flower

Queen. She looked so young and lovely. She cannot be pitiless."

He summoned fresh courage and again travelled day and night, over sea and land, until he reached Switzerland and the foot of the mountain chain, where the misfortune had overtaken him. Still surrounded by the circle of flowers, he climbed with his knapsack to the pine-wood and the pasture up above the clouds to the steep hill-side, saw the projecting rock, with the dense growth of edelweiss, and with a throbbing heart climbed across the narrow ridge to the overhanging boulder. He had scarcely stepped on it when the Flower Queen stood before him, looked sternly at him, and exclaimed, "Are you here again?"

At the same moment his ring of blossoms scattered, all the flowers hastened to their Queen, surrounding and nestling closely to her, and for the first time in many months he was free from his prison, even in the open air.

Kneeling before the Flower Queen, he raised his hands beseechingly and said humbly: "Fair Queen, be content with my punishment. Forgive the crime I committed against you and your flowers, and which I deeply repent."

She was silent a short time, and then replied, "Repentance is not enough; I demand atonement."

"What shall I do to atone?" he asked anxiously.

"Look at this slope below us. It resembled a gay carpet. Now it is wholly green, not a single blossom adorns it. You must plant it with flowers again. When you have made it as gay as it was before, the punishment shall be taken from you."

The student wanted to ask her how he should set to work, but she disappeared, and his flower prison, which had separated, once more closed around him. He went back to the field, sat down on the grass, and wondered how he should begin to plant flowers here. Suddenly a thought darted through his brain. He started up and stretched his hand toward the circle of flowers. Lo! it did not move back, his hand did not grasp the air, but seized a beautiful clump of Alpine violets, which quietly allowed him to hold them. He pulled gently the violets, with all their delicate roots, remained in his hand. True, there was no gap in the ring, another flower sprang up in the place of the clump of violets. Digging a hole in the ground with his penknife and his fingers, he planted the violets and moved away several steps. His ring of flowers followed, but the violets remained.

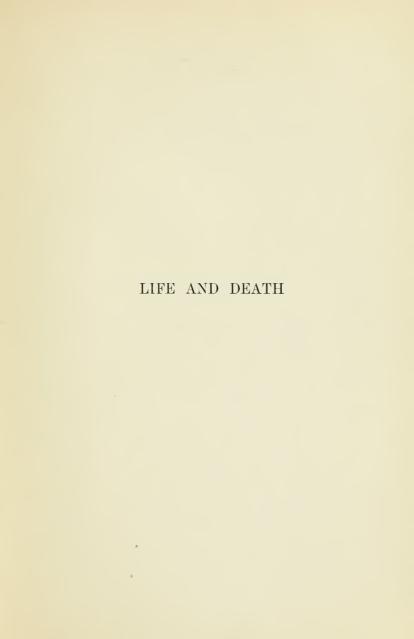
Now he knew enough. He hurried down to the little city, bought, amid the stares of the people, gardening tools and provisions enough to last for some time, and went back to the field above the clouds. From dawn till twilight he worked with the greatest industry, dug hole after hole, took flower after flower from his ring, planted them, watered them abundantly from a neighboring spring, and scarcely allowed himself fifteen minutes rest for his scanty meals.

Three or four weeks passed, a large portion of the field was again gay with beautiful flowers growing thickly together, when to his intense joy he noticed that the flowers which he still drew from his ring were no longer replaced with others. The circular hedge first grew narrower, then gaps appeared, then one-quarter, one-half, three-quarters vanished, and one day he put the last blossom in the earth, and there was nothing more left of the ring. He knelt again and called aloud, "Oh, Queen, are you satisfied with my work?"

But the Flower Queen did not appear, only a strange movement ran through the countless blossoms in the field, as though they were all nodding their lovely little heads.

The student picked up his knapsack and went down to the valley. He cast stolen glances around him on the way, but no flower followed. He was really free from his prison of blossoms, and could again live with other men.

But while planting the Alpine meadow he had gained such a taste for gardening that he resolved to devote himself to this profession. So he became a very famous florist, and several beautiful varieties of flowers, which he introduced from foreign countries, still bear his name.





## LIFE AND DEATH

At the foot of a giant mountain, with a snow-capped head, lay a quiet valley, through which flowed a swift little stream. Its waves bathed the roots of an ancient oak, which was reflected in the water. Under the shadow of the tree grew masses of blue gentians and other flowers, and in its top a very wise old raven had built a nest.

It was a midsummer day, the gentians were in bloom, and their petals began to droop in the heat. Then one blossom, whose neighbor had already lost half its leaves, began to complain: "How miserable we poor flowers are, and what a sad fate we have! We enjoy our lives only during one short spring. A few kisses from the sun, a few beautiful nights under the dew and the moonbeams, a few caresses from the evening breeze, a few visits from the moths and pretty gold beetles, a few bird songs, then all the pleasure is over, and it never comes back again. Before we fairly have time to enjoy our lives, they are ended. How much happier is this oak, whose branches rustle above us! It has seen thousands of generations of gentians bloom and fade away, yet it still lives and perhaps will enjoy the pleasures of spring a thousand years more."

She paused and hung her little head sorrowfully. But a roaring noise passed through the boughs of the old oak, and the tree in a dry, grating voice answered:—

"Little fool, you talk as you understand. Yes, I live longer than you do. But you are very much mistaken if you imagine that I am to be envied on that account. The spring sun kisses you awake, as a mother rouses her child. You grow without any troubles, and your life is all-pleasure. You know nothing except the joy of spring and the happiness of summer, you do not have to bear the sorrows of autumn. You have no enemies, you don't know what it is to struggle and to suffer, you see nothing in the world except beauty and pleasure. But I — all through my youth I had to defend myself against numberless enemies who wanted to take my life. I was attacked by grubs and worms, caterpillars and beetles, the greedy teeth of grazing animals, and the poison of tiny fungi. After I had escaped all these perils and grew up, what was my fate? Storms vented their fury on me, tossed me about, and even broke my branches. The lightning tore my bark in long strips from my body, and gave me cruel wounds. Look at me — I am completely covered with scars.

"Autumn plucked off all my leaves every year, and winter pierced me to my inmost heart with cold. Long after you were sunning yourselves happily in the spring, I was scarcely thawed out, and still felt the pricking



"'Look at me, I am completely covered with scars."



of the sap as it began to ascend into the frozen boughs. Even during the few pleasant weeks that my scanty blossoms adorned me, I could not help thinking anxiously of the coming winter and its tortures. So what do I gain by living longer than you? I have already been here a thousand years, and when I look back, it seems but a single day. The moments of happiness were rare, and all the rest was trouble, toil, and suffering. If I loved a bird that built its nest in my branches, or a flower that grew at my foot, I saw them disappear and had to mourn them. Now I am old, my trunk is hollow, worms are gnawing my roots, my branches are dying. Bit by bit my mouldering body will fall into ruin, until pitiless time has entirely destroyed me. I envy you the unvarying beauty and happiness of your life and its swift, easy end. If we must die, it makes no difference whether it is a little sooner or a little later. Ah, if we never grew old, if we could live forever like the mountain giant above us! If you wish a different lot, wish for his, not mine."

All was still for a time, then the mountain shook with rumbling, groaning noises, and in deep, yawning sounds it spoke slowly, in short sentences, interrupted by long pauses:—

"Oak, oak, have you no more sense than the blue thing yonder, the little gentian? Nonsense about my eternity. I, too, shall some day perish. Nothing in the world is eternal. The earth itself is not — nor the sun.

The air and the water both gnaw at me. They wear me away continually. You are growing. I am constantly becoming smaller. Some day there will be nothing left. Then it will be as if I never had existed, even though I have lasted so long. True, I feel no sorrow over it. What does it matter whether I live a long or a short time? There is no pleasure in my existence. Here I stand year after year, staring out into the world. Everything is the same to me, summer and winter, day and night. Nothing stirs within me. I feel nothing. I hope for nothing. I am afraid of nothing. I do not grow as you do. I do not draw up joyously, with thirsty roots, the juices of the earth. I put forth no leaves and blossoms. I ripen no fruits. No descendants spring up around me. I experience nothing pleasant, and nothing unpleasant.

"I think little, I dream dully, am terribly bored, and scarcely notice what is going on around me. Everything is stupid and uninteresting. How gladly I would change places with you! Or even with the gentians that live only one summer. You feel something. I—nothing."

At this moment the raven in the top of the tree croaked loudly. "Look there!" he called to the mountain, the oak, and the flowers, pointing with his beak and wings to the brook which rippled through the valley. Above the little stream rose countless tiny, winged creatures, which hovered over it like a thick cloud. It was a swarm

of ephemera. They spread their delicate, transparent wings, breathed the fresh air, bathed their dainty bodies in the warm sunbeams. Intoxicated by the light and the warmth, the sweet air, thrilling in every nerve with joy and excitement, they began to dance: singly, in couples, in bands. They darted to and fro, swung in circles, whirled around hither and thither, up and down, with twitching legs and beating wings. Their eyes shone with pleasure. Their shrill buzzing expressed the greatest joy. They felt neither hunger nor thirst, but feasted on the air and sunshine. They did not think of what might be before them. They did not puzzle their brains about what might happen after. The present hour was theirs, and that was enough. They were alive now, they were enjoying all the pleasures of the summer world, they were perfectly happy.

The sun reached his noonday height and sank toward the west, but the ephemeræ did not heed it. They went on dancing, absorbed in their wild whirl, rejoicing in their mutual happiness, until the day was nearly over and the evening shadows began to gather in the valley. Then a delightful weariness stole over them, a pleasant, drowsy feeling destroyed their joy in dancing and dulled their senses. They drew up their legs, folded their wings, and sank down from the air upon the brook. The wonderful memories of the happy day, which filled their little heads, grew less distinct, everything around them became misty, and they fell asleep sweetly, like children

who have played until they are tired. But they were not asleep. They were dead.

When their little bodies covered the surface of the stream, the wise raven said to the mountain, the oak, and the gentian: "A long life, a short life, matters nothing. A beautiful life. That is happiness."

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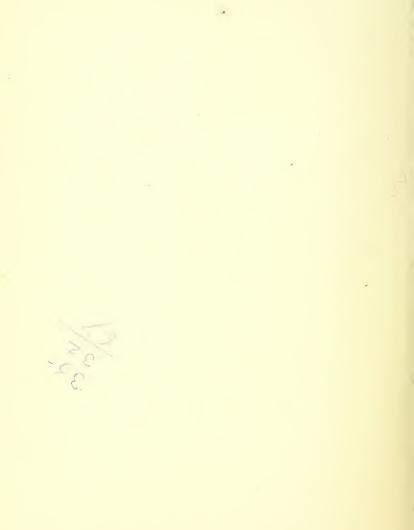
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